

# MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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## THE COURT OF SACHARISSA.

(A MIDSUMMER IDYLL.)

### CHAPTER IV.

THEIR voices were audible as they came up the path towards the fountain. One voice, evidently the Man of Truth's, said loudly, "He's not fit to be trusted with a ticket." Another voice, the Ambassador's, answered in a decided tone: "No, you are quite right; he shall not be allowed to have it again." There was a plaintive murmur from the Exotic, but the words could not be distinguished.

Sacharissa came along the alley on the right of the fountain holding a croquet-mallet in her hand. She greeted them smiling. "Has he lost his ticket?" she asked with a glance at the Exotic, who appeared to be somewhat bored by the discussion.

"He always does," said the Man of Truth in a tone of deep disgust.

"I threw it out of the window," the Exotic explained, fixing an uneasy eye on the croquet-mallet.

"Why did you do that?" she questioned in real surprise.

"It annoyed me," he said, as though no more explanation were necessary.

Sacharissa laughed merrily and continued her cross-examination. "How did it annoy you?"

"It was faded," he replied wearily. Sacharissa did not seem to think this a sufficient reason so he added, "Well, the man punched it all crooked."

"Do you always throw your ticket away if it is not punched straight?" she asked.

"Of course I do," answered the Exotic.

"Does he really?" she appealed to the Ambassador.

"Not always," he returned with a smile; "he generally loses it before he has time."

Perhaps Sacharissa's face expressed a little surprise that the Ambassador should allow such things, for he explained apologetically: "I have always had a lingering hope that some day he would reform. However, he shall not have a ticket again."

"I wonder," she began thoughtfully, "what will happen to him when he no longer has you to look after him, when you marry or something."

"I can't imagine," said the Ambassador, much amused.

The Exotic displayed philosophy. "In that case," he said, "I shall hire a person to buy me nice bright-coloured tickets and to see that they are punched straight."

He stopped speaking and looked so intensely bored that the Ambassador, who was watching him, glanced round to discover the reason. It proved to be a tall stranger with a moustache who had come up behind Sacharissa in time to catch the

Exotic's last sentence, and who was now regarding him with the precision of military astonishment. The stranger too was holding a croquet-mallet, which he carried at the trail.

The heels of the Mime came together with a click as he stood to what the front rows of the pit mistake for *attention*. The Poet, who in the quest for inspiration had been biting the end of his pencil, recollected himself and put it nervously back into his pocket. The Scribe considered the stranger's moustache, while the Man of Truth frankly estimated his shoulders.

Sacharissa murmured something of which the only word audible was *Major*, and the Ambassador, divining intuitively that the introduction was complete, stepped forward and offered a cordial hand, an example which was followed by the Scribe. As the path was not very wide the others contented themselves with bowing.

"I hope we have not interrupted a game," said the Ambassador politely.

"Oh no," answered Sacharissa; "we had not begun yet."

"We were only knocking the balls about," said the Major.

"We thought you might like to play," said Sacharissa, "so we waited. We shall just be able to make up two sets if you all play."

The Exotic stifled a sigh and followed the others meekly along the path which led away from the fountain to the right. Sacharissa, who acted as guide, was attended by the Major and the Ambassador, one on either hand. Presently they passed under an arch of briar-roses and found themselves on a rectangular lawn on which hoops were set. It was surrounded by yew-hedges and looked delightfully smooth and cool.

"How shall we divide?" said Sacharissa. She surveyed her forces with a general's eye, but found that

chance had saved her the trouble of selection; the Scribe had followed close behind the Ambassador, while the others had lingered a little and were only just on the lawn. She turned to the Man of Truth and said: "Will you four play on this lawn, then? You will find the mallets and things in that box. We will go on to the other."

The Major looked satisfied with this arrangement and strode on by Sacharissa's side. In the left-hand corner was another trellised arch, containing a garden-seat set back from the path and so cunningly concealed that it could not be seen until one was within the archway. They passed through and came upon a second lawn parallel with the first and separated from it by a low hedge of yew.

"Shall we play as we are?" suggested the Ambassador as he picked up the mallet with one red stripe.

"I hope you are a good player then," said Sacharissa, innocently pointing out that she had the other red mallet. "I've only played the new game once before."

The Ambassador assured her that he would do his best.

"We are forestalled," said the Scribe pleasantly to the Major, who replied by looking disparagingly at his own mallet with its two blue rings. "I expect you play a strong game," continued the Scribe as he picked up the fourth mallet.

"Oh, so so," returned the Major striding over to fetch his ball. While the balls were being collected Sacharissa ran back to the archway to satisfy herself that the others lacked nothing. Here she encountered the Exotic who was regarding the hidden seat with an appreciative eye. "Have you got everything you want here?" she asked.

"More than sufficient, thank you," he answered with great politeness.

"I like the balls; they're nice and bright."

"They are a new set; I've only just got them," she said, after which she came back to her own party. "Do you hunt?" she heard the Major say to the Ambassador as she approached them.

"A certain amount," was the answer, "but I find it increasingly difficult to spare the time." The Major looked surprised; the idea that anyone should not be able to spare time seemed to be new to him.

Sacharissa reached them at this moment. "Will you throw a penny to see who is to begin?" she said to the Ambassador. He smiled and spun a coin in the air.

"Heads," cried the Major. "Tails," cried the Scribe in the same breath. "That ought to make certain of it somehow," he added with a laugh.

"Throw it again," suggested Sacharissa. The Ambassador did so, but this time neither of them called.

"Major, you call," she said perceiving that the Scribe was looking towards him. With great alacrity he obeyed and lost.

"We ought to have made sure of it," observed the Scribe smiling.

The voice of the Man of Truth reached them from the other lawn. "It's got two tails," it said indignantly.

The Scribe laughed. "That's the Exotic's oriental coin," he explained; "he says it's a lucky one and always tries to get people to toss up with it."

The game began. The Ambassador addressed himself to his ball, measuring his distances with a well-trained eye. He accomplished his two first hoops, put himself in position for the third and regained his partner's side without unnecessary delay. She welcomed him back with an approving smile, and called his attention to the Scribe who was testing the balance

of his mallet with a professional air. "I'm afraid he's going to be too good for all of us," she said, a little apprehensive at these serious preparations.

"I'm so sorry," he returned looking round, "I would have brought my own mallet, if I'd known. The moral effect is always worth at least three hoops," he explained as he began to play.

"He does not possess one to my knowledge," the Ambassador assured her. The Scribe made the second hoop with precision, and on his third stroke captured the Ambassador's ball with a long shot which elicited Sacharissa's unwilling applause. He bore his honours modestly and pursued the even tenor of his way. After the fourth hoop he looked round. The next player was Sacharissa and she was becoming impatient. It seemed a pity to keep her waiting; he conscientiously wired his unwilling ally, and placed himself for the fifth hoop. After this he rejoined the others.

"I thought you were never going to stop," observed Sacharissa as she turned to her ball.

"I am rebuked," said the Scribe cheerfully to the Ambassador, who, however, was following his partner.

Sacharissa's first turn displayed more of grace than of accuracy. She looked ruefully at her ball as it bounded back from the wire of the second hoop. "It always does that," she complained with a little pout to the Ambassador who stood by with advice.

His sympathetic reply was cut short by a warning shout from the Major,—"Look out, I'm coming." He came. A finely executed drive sent his ball through the first hoop, over the opposite boundary and into the hedge, where he spent some time in hunting for it. The Scribe shrugged his shoulders in some self-

pity and looked round for sympathy ; but the Ambassador's attention was already claimed, or given.

The voice of the Mime was wafted on the breeze. "It is my ball," it said impatiently.

"I expect you will be wanted soon," said the Scribe to the Ambassador. Sacharissa laughed. The matter was apparently cleared up, however, without need of intervention, for the Mime was next heard to remark in tones of surprise, "I could have sworn it was my ball," to which the Exotic replied placidly : "I don't mind ; in fact, I would prefer you to hit it."

The Major's second stroke placed him on the right side of his hoop and conveniently approximate to Sacharissa. The Scribe made no comment but, after the Ambassador had played, proceeded in leisurely fashion to the peg. Then he looked round ; the Major and Sacharissa were standing by their hoop, and the Ambassador was at hand with advice. He glanced at the easy mark, but murmured to himself, "It would be rather a pity," and hit at random across the lawn. "I have finished," he announced incisively.

"What shall I do?" asked Sacharissa after she had got through her hoop with the help of the Major's ball.

"You had better come to me," advised the Ambassador stooping down to remove an inconsiderable twig, "and leave him behind." Sacharissa accomplished the manoeuvre successfully.

The Major applauded her play and walked back to his own ball. "Here I am," cried the Scribe intent on combination.

The Major swung his mallet, keeping one eye on the third hoop. "Better separate them, hadn't I?" he called back as he took aim at Sacharissa's ball.

"Oh, it's gone right through the hedge," she cried in consternation. The Major looked at the hedge as though wondering what it could be made of. "We must wait while you go round to fetch it," she added, and he departed on his errand.

"He kicked it," proclaimed an angry voice on the next lawn. Sacharissa's eyes sparkled. "I must peep at them," she said to the Ambassador and she ran across to a garden-seat against the dividing hedge. The Ambassador handed her up, and stepping up himself they watched the scene.

The Exotic was leaning on his mallet smiling sweetly. The others were gesticulating round a ball near the peg. "I saw him do it," said the Man of Truth.

"I am sure he didn't," protested the Mime.

"Didn't you kick it?" the Man of Truth appealed to the Exotic himself.

"Yes, I kicked it," he answered in a pleased tone.

"Why?" The Poet remonstrated. "It isn't allowed."

"Oh, isn't it?" said the Exotic interested. "I didn't know. I thought in this game one had to get through hoops."

Sacharissa's face was alight with merriment. "They are perfectly delightful," she whispered to the Ambassador who smiled with an air of proprietorship.

"I've found it," said the voice of the Major solemnly behind them.

"Oh then we can go on," said Sacharissa ; "whose turn is it?"

"Mine, I think," said the Ambassador offering his hand to assist her down from the seat. The Major's hand was also extended but he was some yards away.

The game proceeded more or less uneventfully. The Ambassador



played correct and unselfish croquet, never permitting himself to get separated from or ahead of his partner, except when it was necessary in her defence to remove the Major's ball. Sacharissa began to think that she was quite a good player.

The Scribe did not interfere much until his adversaries were approaching the first peg; he then addressed the Major who had followed his ball to the far corner of the lawn. "Get into position," he called.

"Position for what?" asked the Major. The Scribe indicated the second hoop, at which his partner looked askance.

"Come to me then," implored the Scribe. The Major looked vaguely round the lawn, but his glance was arrested by the figures of Sacharissa and the Ambassador. She was listening, possibly to instruction on future policy. This determined him, and his shot followed the direction of his eye.

It was too much for the Scribe, who on his next turn descended and scattered the group, a piece of violence which provoked a remonstrance from Sacharissa. "You've left me all by myself; what am I to do?" The Ambassador's reply was ready, and he pointed out with more success than the Scribe the advantages of combination.

"You are in position," said the Scribe as the Major was drawing a bead on Sacharissa's ball.

"What for?" asked the Major, looking up in surprise.

"That's your hoop; I put you there," said the Scribe wearily.

"Oh, is it?" said the Major. He unbent so far as to put his ball hard through the second hoop. But immediately afterwards a more ambitious stroke lost him in the hedge.

It was some time before he could find his ball, and Sacharissa took the opportunity to look at the game again

from the garden-seat. The Exotic was about to play under the tuition of the Mime whose ball was close to a hoop.

"Hit it very gently," exhorted the teacher. The Exotic made great preparations for his stroke. He plucked a blade of grass and removed it carefully; then with his mallet he patted every inch of the two feet of lawn that lay between the balls.

Then he played, pushing his ball along cautiously until it was within a foot of the other, after which he allowed it to roll unaided.

"That's not a fair stroke," said the Man of Truth appealing to the Poet for support, but the Poet was watching a butterfly.

"That's all right," said the Mime encouragingly. "Now put them both through the hoop." But the Exotic had other views. As an intelligent spectator of the Man of Truth's play he had made the discovery that the genius of croquet consists not only in getting through hoops but also in preventing others from so doing. Accordingly with unexpected energy he croquetted the Mime to the further corner and then came back to his own hoop satisfied.

The Man of Truth laughed, and the Mime relieved his feelings in blank verse.

"O monstrous treachery! Can this be  
so,  
That in alliance, amity and oaths,  
There should be found such false  
dissembling guile?"

So saying he stalked tragically away. The voice of the Scribe recalled Sacharissa and the Ambassador from this interesting scene. "If you are ready, we are," it said pointedly.

The game continued. The others proceeded much in the same way but the Scribe made no further attempt to interfere with their progress, and

instead removed himself to a distant corner where he employed his turns in practising difficult strokes at a hoop. Meanwhile he watched the three with amusement. At last, however, perceiving that they were catching him up, he placed himself for his real hoop in the middle of the lawn. Fortune did not favour him; he was nearly in a direct line between the Major and Sacharissa.

"I took some trouble to get into that position," he said, as he watched his ball hurrying across the grass after the shock.

"Extremely sorry," said the Major, "I wasn't aiming at it at all." He tried conscientiously to repair the error with the croquet, but only succeeded in delivering the Scribe's ball into the hands of the enemy, remaining himself in the embrace of an opposing hoop.

"Very pretty, if it had been the other way round," said the Scribe with malice. The Major's stroke was followed by a hubbub on the next lawn. "This isn't Rugby football," said the Man of Truth's voice in high-pitched irony.

"Who said it was?" retorted the Mime.

"Well, he picked it up and carried it," said the Man of Truth descending to fact.

"I didn't notice it," returned the Mime.

"I did," put in the Poet.

For some minutes they all talked at once and then the Man of Truth asked sternly: "Didn't you pick it up and carry it?"

"Yes," answered the voice of the Exotic amiably; "isn't that allowed either?" The dispute died away and the Ambassador went on with his stroke, putting Sacharissa through the last of the side hoops and leaving his ball at her disposal. About ten minutes later the Major perceived,

as he meditated strategy in the far corner of the lawn, that the game had reached a critical point. The Ambassador, who was the next player, was in position for the last hoop, while Sacharissa, already a rover, waited for him close to the peg. The Scribe had pegged himself out as a kind of protest two turns before and the Major was alone in play, but no longer deserted by his partner, who ironically urged him to heroic effort.

While he was preparing for a last display the Man of Truth's voice echoed across the hedge: "It's his turn; where is he?"

The Major made sure of his distance and direction and took careful aim at the Ambassador's ball. Loud cries of *Exotic!* came from the other lawn.

"I thought it could be no other *he*," smiled Sacharissa to the Ambassador.

Encouraged by the Scribe, the Major balanced himself carefully on extended feet, opened his shoulders, raised his mallet and let drive. The ball flew across the ground, struck the Ambassador's hoop, glanced off it and leaped violently into the hedge near the trellised archway.

"Oh dear," cried Sacharissa, "it will go right through into the river."

As she spoke however there arose from the arch a loud cry of *Allah!* followed by great lamentations in an unknown tongue.

"It must have hit the Exotic," said the Ambassador laughing.

She laughed too, but grew serious the moment after. "I do hope he isn't much hurt," she said. "You really oughtn't to hit so hard," she added severely to the Major; "it's quite dangerous." The Major pulled his moustache with his left hand and said he was extremely sorry.

"Perhaps we had better go and see," suggested the Ambassador.

They found the Exotic sitting on the garden-seat in the archway nursing his ankle in one hand while in the other he held the Major's ball, which he addressed reproachfully in the unknown tongue. The Man of Truth and the Poet appeared at the other side of the arch at the same moment.

"Oh there he is," said the Man of Truth.

"He has an unerring instinct," the Poet murmured looking at the comfortable seat with admiration.

The Exotic complained that he had been very much hurt by somebody's croquet-ball.

"Serves you right," said the Man of Truth unsympathetically.

The Scribe anxious to preserve the balance of justice informed the Exotic that the ball belonged to the Major. "He was knocking it about," he explained in parenthesis.

"What were you doing here?" asked the Ambassador, feeling that it was a little hard on the Major. "We thought that you were on the other lawn."

"So I was," answered the mournful Exotic, "but I got tired and came away to rest. You see, I thought the Man of Truth was going on for ever. He did about thirty hoops one after the other and I didn't see much good in my staying. I had just made myself comfortable on this excellent seat when a small earthquake came and hit me on the ankle."

"I hope it is not very bad?" said Sacharissa anxiously.

"No, it's better now," said the Exotic without thought. He hastened to repair his error. "I don't think I could play any more croquet, though."

"You sha'n't," Sacharissa assured him kindly; "you shall come and have tea and be waited upon."

The Major took the opportunity of apologising to the Exotic as the party strolled towards the arbour. "Don't mention it," said the wounded one. "It is fate. It was doubtless the will of heaven that I should play no more croquet, and you were the instrument of its manifestation."

"Do you hunt?" asked the Major turning to more general topics. The Exotic apparently did not hear the question so it was repeated. The Exotic looked round for aid but the Ambassador was on in front. "Hunt what?" he said when he realised that he must face it. The Major's eyebrows went up, but he explained his meaning patiently.

"No," said the Exotic, "I do not hunt the fox. The fact is," he went on in a burst of confidence, "I prefer tigers."

As the Exotic had intended, the Major's brow cleared. A tiger affords quite as good sport as a fox. "Been in India much?" he asked in a tone of interest.

"Years and years," said the Exotic airily, hoping that the Major would not press the point.

But that gentleman was on a congenial subject. "I suppose you shoot from elephants mostly," he said.

The word *elephants* gave the Exotic a little courage. He knew at least what an elephant was, and he confessed that that was the case.

"It's not so risky as the other way," the Major opined.

The spirit of contradiction entered the Exotic. "It has its risks though," he said taking thought.

"I suppose you have found yourself in a tight place now and then?" suggested the Major.

"Yes," said the Exotic ransacking his memory. "I remember one occasion on which I only just saved myself by a small miracle."

The Major invited the story and

the Exotic, nothing loth, began to narrate. "I was sitting on my elephant lost in meditation, while my steed refreshed itself with the ripe leaves of a banyan tree,"—the Major looked at him quickly, but he went on with a rapt air—"when I was startled by a loud howl, and looking round I saw advancing towards me out of the jungle six enormous tigers."

"Six?" repeated the Major as though he had not heard plainly.

"Six or seven," said the Exotic; "I could not count them exactly, they jumped about so. Well, the biggest of them began to climb up my elephant, as they will. A curious thing about it was," the Exotic continued meditatively, "that the noble beast did not seem to mind. It went on eating the tree as though nothing was happening. I wondered at the time, I remember, why it did not kick. Well, I retreated to the other side and when the tiger's head came over the edge of the elephant I pulled the trigger, and then I found that I had forgotten to load my gun." The Exotic paused to take more thought; the narrative began to interest him. The Major coughed nervously. "It opened its mouth horribly," the story continued, "and I gave myself up for lost as its shoulders gradually appeared behind its head, and then, fortunate chance, I remembered that I had a box of wax matches with me. Quick as thought I set it on fire and threw it down the yawning chasm of the tiger's throat. That saved me. The ferocious monster climbed down again and rolled about screaming, and I set my spurs into the elephant and galloped away."

The Major coughed again, but made no comment on the story, which may have been due to the fact that by this time they had reached the arbour and the tea-table.

## CHAPTER V.

"I DON'T believe you are a bit sorry for him," said Sacharissa to the Scribe, who seemed to be rather amused at her ministrations to the Exotic, and who had just enquired tenderly after his health.

"Surely he does not need pity,—now?" suggested the Ambassador in courtly fashion. She gave him a little glance, understanding and yet defiant, and continued to press good things upon the object of contention. The Exotic accepted another cup of tea with the air of one who knows that he is not long for this world but who has forgiven everybody and is at peace.

The Major who had been wrestling with silence for some time at last said, "I wish it had been me."

"It was," said the Man of Truth in what was meant for a tone of consolation.

"I mean," the Major became more lucid, "I wish it had been the other way about and his ball had hit me."

"Oh no," protested the Exotic with the faded smile of an early martyr; "if anyone had to be sacrificed I would not have had it otherwise."

The Major looked dissatisfied; it seemed that his point had been missed, but Sacharissa understood him. "Thank you for the compliment," she said sweetly and his brow cleared.

Presently when she perceived that the Exotic was sufficiently recovered to light a cigarette she said, "What language were you talking, when we found you, and what were you saying?"

"I was repeating a few words of Arabic to myself," he replied.

"What about?" she asked.

"The graves of the ancestors," he returned darkly. Sacharissa looked puzzled. "The croquet-ball's ances-

tors," he explained. She shook her head in bewilderment.

"I know," cried the Man of Truth; "he was swearing. That's the way they do it out there."

"I wasn't," the Exotic protested; "I was only making a few suggestions."

"It is swearing all the same," said the Man of Truth.

"I ought not to have asked," said Sacharissa discreetly.

"It was all right really," said the Exotic with some earnestness. "I was quoting the preliminary invocation to his Careful Camel used by the Considerate Kurd when—" The Exotic checked himself on meeting the Ambassador's eye and relapsed into dreamy silence.

The Ambassador led the conversation away to a less dangerous field. "Croquet," he said thoughtfully, "appears to me to be degenerating into a game."

The Major uncrossed his legs and looked perplexed.

"Not this afternoon, at any rate," murmured the Scribe to the Poet who regarded him without comprehension.

"It should be," continued the Ambassador slowly, "a sacrifice on the altar of the romantic poet."

"Perhaps it isn't much of a game," admitted the Major feeling that he was expected to say something.

"It is the minuet of games," observed the Ambassador. The Man of Truth opened his mouth, but on second thoughts pretended that he had only done so for the convenience of his cigarette. The Ambassador went on. "In croquet the spirit of knightly chivalry should still survive. One should feel that one has the privilege of making the fortune of a partner one's first care."

"Yes," assented the Scribe; "it is surprising how often one sees his

partner putting a man indignantly through his hoop."

"I hope I did not show my indignation too plainly," said Sacharissa slyly to the Ambassador. "I think I helped you through two hoops."

"You concealed it to perfection," he answered lightly.

"So did you," she said thinking of other hoops unmentioned.

"A man's indignation rather depends on the partner," commented the Scribe.

"Of course," said the Ambassador, looking at the lady. Sacharissa dropped her eyelashes.

The Major, who was dissatisfied with his share of the conversation, turned suddenly upon the Poet. "Do you hunt?" he demanded.

The question, however, flew innocuous over the Poet's distracted head and reached the Man of Truth, who answered "No, I don't like hunting." The unashamed frankness of this confession reduced the Major to wondering silence.

But Sacharissa came to the rescue of his topic. "You hunted once, didn't you?" she said wickedly to the Mime.

"I did," he replied in a sepulchral tone which dashed the Major's rising hopes. "I have only once been in greater danger," he went on, and it became obvious that he meant to relate the incident. Perceiving this the Ambassador motioned to the Poet and the Man of Truth to draw back their chairs, so that there might be a clear stage for the narrator.

"Yes," said the Mime defiantly, "it was the most awful moment of my life," he ran his hand through his hair and gathered himself together for swift action. Sacharissa looked appealingly at the Ambassador who understood. Rising he disposed the tea-tables so that they made a stout barrier for her protection, after which



he returned to his seat by her side, where he permitted himself a cigarette and was rewarded by a smile. The Major who was at her other side refused the box and obtained permission to light a cheroot, at which he puffed, contentedly regarding his hostess. The breeze was kinder to him than he deserved for it blew the fumes away from Sacharissa, and they merely inconvenienced the Poet.

Meanwhile the Exotic had raised a protest against the Mime's too liberal use of dramatic force. "Please remember," he pleaded, "it's really very warm, and if you move about so it will hurt my ankle."

The Mime called Heaven and Earth to witness with a sweep of his arm. "You deserve to have it hurt," he retorted; "why it was all your fault from first to last."

The Exotic's look of guileless surprise could not have been surpassed even by the prospective narrator, but he was betrayed by the Scribe who suggested, "I suppose you offered to come and help him out, didn't you?"

Sacharissa was amused; she remembered the various occasions on which the Exotic had given his friendly assistance to those in need.

"Well, I'll tell you how it was, and then you'll know why he deserves to be hurt," said the Mime. He paused a moment to get into his proper vein and then began with enthusiasm. "She was superb, a very empress of her sex, and I loved her to distraction. But I had a rival, a dangerous rival, her cousin. He was a Cambridge man." The Mime threw a whole act of scorn into the words. The Ambassador looked hurriedly at the Man of Truth, who laboured under the same disability as the cousin in the story and had not yet had time to forget it, but fortunately his attention was diverted. He was watching the Exotic who, with an air

of patient suffering, waited the time when it should please a wasp to fly off the edge of the tea-cup balanced on his knee.

The Mime went on. "It was Christmas and we were staying near her in the country; so was the cousin. I hate cousins,—that is other people's male cousins," he corrected himself. "Many times have I loved, devotedly, desperately," his voice grew tremulous; "but there was always a cousin."

"Who begins," put in the Scribe sardonically, "by behaving to her like a brother, and ends insidiously as a husband."

The Mime nodded. "The girl who has cousins is doomed. And I had a fatal presentiment. The cousin used to take her to theatres, to walk with her on the promenade and along the cliff, while for me the August sun had no warmth, no brightness." His voice grew hollow, and he paused dramatically.

The Major gazed at him in unfeigned amazement, and Sacharissa looked puzzled. The Man of Truth, however, stepped in briskly. "You said it was Christmas in the country," he objected.

"This," remarked the Scribe, "is not a common-place tale of the imagination; therefore you must not ask for an explanation of apparent inconsistencies." He looked to see if his shaft had struck the Exotic, but that blameless person was affectionately regarding his wasp, which after an elaborate toilet had just flown off to annoy the Poet.

"Oh that was something quite different, I mean it had happened long before," the Mime corrected himself rather lamely; "but the crisis was now at hand. I felt that I must defeat that cousin at all risks. So I took counsel. First I asked him," the Mime glared at the Ambassador, "and he suggested appealing to her

intelligence by lofty converse and trying to excel in physical exercises, or something like that." Sacharissa stole an amused glance at the giver of advice but his face displayed only polite and impersonal interest. "But the only thing to excel in was skating, and my skating is like—" the Mime hesitated for a comparison.

"Yes, you do cut rather original figures," put in the Ambassador, which showed that the Mime had not failed to touch him. The description was satisfactory, however, and the story continued. "The cousin, of course, could take her about in sleighs and things while I had to sit on the bank and watch from afar. Then I made a fatal mistake; I consulted the Exotic, who said he would help me out." The Mime shook his head sadly. "He recommended me to take up palmistry. He said it was an easy and pleasant form of science in which you sat in a retired corner holding a lady's hand and described to her the sort of man she would marry. He said the real art came in in giving a faithful description of yourself, but in a jerky way reading it out in little bits, as if you didn't know it was yourself at all, though of course she could see who it was all along. He said in all his experience he had never known it fail."

At this point the Exotic, who had lost interest in his wasp, looked up innocently, to find Sacharissa regarding him with suspicion. He smiled reassuringly; also he began to attend.

"Well, I was fool enough to try it,"—the Mime grew melancholy—"and the cousin overheard. He came up at once and began to ask me a lot of leading questions about mounts and lines, which I could not answer. The Exotic never even tried to help me; he only stroked a cat and looked sleepy. Then that

cousin, in her presence, took my hand and began to tell my character, *mine!* He said I was fickle and inconstant; he prophesied that my first wife would die within a year of a broken heart. What could I do? I denied it of course, and appealed to that," he pointed contemptuously to the Exotic, "who said that he himself knew nothing about these things, and would not venture on an opinion; which meant to say that you hadn't heard a word and were too lazy to come out of your chair."

"There was the cat to consider," murmured the accused one.

"I suppose the cousin really was something of a palmist?" the Scribe hazarded.

"He knew what he was talking about then, at all events," said the Man of Truth.

"Worse was to come," groaned the Mime, who in preparing for this dramatic utterance had not listened to the interruptions, "worse, the worst. I consulted the Exotic again."

"That was unwise, surely?" suggested the Ambassador.

"Well, this time," continued the Mime, "he made a suggestion which really seemed sensible. He thought I might get up some theatricals in which she and I could act together. He said he would help, he would sit in a chair and prompt,—he called that taking a part in a play," the Mime was scornful. "Well, I went over to suggest it and she was delighted. There was to be a charity entertainment and a temperance lecture, and it was agreed that some really good acting would be a draw. I was about to suggest a dialogue with her, when the cousin came in. Of course she told him all about the plan, and he didn't seem to understand that it was my idea, though he admitted that it was a good one. He said at once that he and she could do THE

LOVING COUPLE, one of those silly sentimental things in which two honey-mooners quarrel and make it up again; it seemed that they had done it before, — atrociously bad taste," growled the Mime.

"You wanted to do a dialogue yourself," remarked the Man of Truth.

"Well, we explained to him that this would not do, and then we discussed the matter. We talked over lots of pieces, — we were sure of getting others to join—but he was an impracticable person to deal with. He always seemed to think there need only be two principal parts. He had absolutely no idea about stage requirements.

"Amateur stage requirements," corrected the Scribe. Sacharissa, who was beginning to sympathise with the Mime,—his tone suggested infinite depths of injury — looked to the Ambassador to intervene. But the Ambassador knew the teller of the tale who proceeded happily self-absorbed.

"Then there was more trouble. The people who were managing the entertainment insisted on having two acts, one before and one after the temperance address, which made the choice of a play more difficult. The Vandals thought a play could be split into bits like a serial story." The Mime's voice trembled as he pursued this by-path of indignation. "So the Exotic said he would help us out. He offered to let us act a play of his own." The Exotic exhibited some slight symptoms of protest.

"You did," said the Mime savagely. "You wanted us to act the Considerate Kurd. I was to be the Kurd, she the Unscrupulous Circassian, and himself the Placid Pasha."

"It would have done beautifully," the Exotic shook his head in regretful self-defence and appealed to the company generally. "And they were

none of them grateful. She didn't like being the Unscrupulous Circassian at all, and as for the cousin I thought he was going to hit me."

"Why, what part did you give him?" asked the Scribe.

"I had arranged for him," answered the Exotic, "the part of the Careful Camel. It would have suited him to perfection, and it would have suited the temperance lecture too, because the Camel does wonderful feats of endurance on buckets of water which it drinks on the stage." This point had an unexpected effect on the Major, and the Exotic having vindicated himself looked at him with peaceful approval.

"It would have made us a laughing-stock," pursued the Mime wrathfully. "However at last we arranged it all and the cousin and I wrote the book. We called it *A DUEL TO THE DEATH*; in the first act two friends rescue a woman from robbers and both love her to distraction. In the second neither will give way, so they fight till one is killed and she marries the victor."

"Good simple play," commented the Scribe.

The Mime went on unnoticed. "The cousin wanted the scene laid in Roman times,—he was one of those muscular people who lift weights and feel their upper arms—but I would not have that, so we finally decided that it should be in the eighteenth century with rapiers and knee-breeches." The Mime regarded his calves complacently. "We got the first act arranged all right, but we had difficulty with the second. The cousin actually expected me to be killed in the duel. That was quite impossible and I appealed to her; but she said she would leave it to us to decide. We had got our costumes and everything, and I had been taking fencing lessons so that I could kill him to perfection,—thus." The Mime leaped

from his seat and lunged with an imaginary rapier at the Major, who having been under fire regarded him with unmoved astonishment.

"We have not, I think, yet come to the duel," suggested the Ambassador. The Mime sat down again and went on quickly. "So we discussed and discussed but to no purpose, though I had written the end as it should have been. It was very moving and tender"; he lingered over the thought of it. "But the cousin had the meanness to copy it out for himself, and one day when I called with the Exotic I found him rehearsing it with her. It was too much. Ah, if I had not weakly yielded then because the Exotic said he would help us out quite to our satisfaction!"

Sacharissa's eyes flashed; she was all anticipation,

"He," continued the Mime, "said we ought to fight the duel as we originally settled, until one of us received a mortal thrust. Then whichever of us was beaten was to fall down and die, and whichever of us was victor was to finish the play. So it was settled, and we both practised and both rehearsed with her. Never was so dramatic an idea. It would have made the fortune of any play, but,—that cousin!" The Mime mopped his brow. "The night came. We were not quite perfect in our words in the first act, and the Exotic of course fell asleep in the prompter's chair. But he explained afterwards that it did not matter because the temperance lecturer was not perfect in his words either, and after all it was the second act which would make the play. The address was over; the stage was cleared, and we were ready for the fight. She was to come on as soon as it was done. Ha!" The Mime was up in earnest now and the Ambassador had only just time to consolidate Sacharissa's rampart

when he stamped defiantly at the salute.

"Our swords clicked; we began. As they ran along each other an awful thing happened; the button of his weapon fell off. Horror! I had to fight with a foil against a rapier; love, life and the play itself were at stake! But I faltered not, for at the first pass I knew myself his master, so—so, we went, and I touched him lightly on the wrist. Had my point too been bare he would have fenced no more, but he went on. Then I made a pass, thus, and was in on his breast, a thrust that would have slain him. And then I learned my danger; he went on,—he smiled, and I knew that he too knew. If I ran, I was disgraced and the play was ruined. If I fought on, he would not yield though I slew him a dozen times, while his first homethrust would be my end. No, I must save the play. I made as if I were hit and fell back on the boards. She came on. Even as I lay I could watch and listen; their acting was superb. His voice was choked with emotion; it was great. The curtain fell, and all was over. I rose to reproach him; but he was gone. I hunted for her; but she could not be found. Only the Exotic could I meet, and he was occupied in pressing wine upon the temperance lecturer, and when I told him of what had happened, he seemed to think it was a joke. And before I found them the cousin had been accepted." The Mime crept back to his chair like an old broken man. One thought, however, seemed to comfort him. He added: "And in the cold grey dawn I roused the Exotic and took him back to London by train without any breakfast." The Exotic shuddered; he remembered the incident.

Sacharissa laughed at this conclusion to the story and its evident effect

on the Exotic. "It served you quite right," she said to him. The Exotic's pained expression showed that he failed to see the justice of so excessive a punishment, but he said nothing.

"You ought to have stopped the play, when you saw the cousin was cheating," said the Man of Truth, pondering how he would have acted himself in similar circumstances.

"He wrote it himself," reproved the Scribe; "you expect too much."

"I don't think she can have loved you," the Poet said dreamily after consideration.

The Major had been thinking the matter out. "If you were really the better swordsman," he began, "you ought to have disarmed him."

"It wasn't provided for in the play," said the Mime gloomily; "and if I had he would probably have gone on with his fists; he meant to win. But it was a fine situation," he concluded with melancholy satisfaction.

The Major broke the silence which had followed on the Mime's tale by turning hopefully to the Scribe. "Do you hunt?" he asked. The Scribe shook his head, informing the Major that his branch of sport was fishing.

Sacharissa heard his answer. "Oh, you've never caught me those trout," she said.

"To tell you the truth, I had almost forgotten the trout," the Scribe answered with a smile.

"Oh well, now I remind you of them, you must bring your rod and catch them," ordained Sacharissa. "Please see that he does; he has such a bad memory," she turned to the Ambassador.

The Exotic murmured something to himself. "I was thinking how nice it would be to sit and watch him while we were having tea," he said on being pressed to repeat himself.

"I don't think you must be allowed

to do that," said Sacharissa, shaking her head. "I think you must bring a rod too, and catch trout as well."

"Perhaps we might be allowed to have tea while *he* catches trout?" suggested the Scribe. The Exotic's face became solemn.

Sacharissa laughed. "No, you sha'n't escape," she insisted. An idea struck her. "I think you ought all to fish. Oh yes you must," she cried, "it will be great fun. We will have a match and see who can bring back the most trout."

"With a prize to be given by the Queen of Beauty?" suggested the Ambassador smiling.

"I will give a prize," she laughed with a little blush. "You must go in for it too," she said to the Major who was regarding the Ambassador with disapproval. "What shall the prize be?" she looked round for suggestions.

"As is set down in the tale of the Considerate Kurd the Princess herself," began the Exotic all in a breath, but the Ambassador's eye was upon him and he stopped abruptly.

"Strawberries would be a good prize," said the Man of Truth taxing his imagination.

"Or cabbages," said the Scribe, without taxing his.

The Poet had not yet spoken, but now he extracted his notebook and felt for his pencil. "The prize," he murmured, "ought to be an emblem of its giver, a rose, white with a soft crimson blush."

Sacharissa blushed again, but did not seem displeased. "Thank you, sir, for your pretty figure," she curtisied to the Poet; "it shall be even as you wish."

#### CHAPTER VI.

"It seems rather long," said Sacharissa, looking at the rod which the



Major was brandishing for her approval; "and isn't it very heavy?"

"I shouldn't call it heavy," he replied; "I could use it all day."

"You must be very strong," she said with some admiration as she tested its weight. The Major pulled his moustache with a pleased right hand. He had been the first to arrive, and had usefully employed the time in describing to Sacharissa the capture of salmon. Finally, taking his rod out of its case, he had given practical illustrations of the proper way of using it. He was just finishing his account of the sport when the others came in sight.

"Have you many salmon in your stream?" asked the Scribe when the greetings were over, considering the Major's rod.

"I don't think there are any," said Sacharissa; "I never heard of one."

"You'll find eighteen feet rather much for a dry-fly rod," the Scribe gravely assured the Major.

"I haven't anything but salmon-rods," said the sportsman. "I only fish for salmon. But if I get hold of a trout it will land it," he added confidently.

"Oh, yes, it will *land* it," the Scribe agreed.

"I've forgotten to bring my rod," announced the Exotic in the tone of one who has just made a delightful discovery. During the past week the Scribe had been coaching him in the art of fishing, and nice distinctions between dry and wet flies had vexed him exceedingly; the climax had been reached when his teacher had insisted on lending him a rod and certain mysteries belonging to it, with injunctions to carry them carefully, to lose nothing and to break nothing. The Exotic, feeling that his freedom as an individual depended on a bold stroke, with much seeming solicitude asked the Scribe to arrange

the things in marching order, and in due course left them carefully behind.

"You shall have mine," said the Ambassador with swift unselfishness, noting at the same instant that Sacharissa held a parasol in her left hand. "No, really I shall play the part of spectator to perfection," he insisted, when she said she might be able to find a rod in the house.

The Exotic's air of satisfaction changed to one of pain as the Ambassador spoke, and became one of horror when the Major, who had found out beforehand that Sacharissa did not propose to take part in the slaughter, added eagerly, "Won't you have mine, too?"

"Wouldn't that give him an unfair advantage?" the Scribe suggested. "Beginner's luck, you know. If he had your big rod there is no limit to what he might catch."

"Oh no, he mustn't have more than one rod," said Sacharissa judicially. "If you really don't mind looking on," she turned to the Ambassador, "we can act as umpires together, and you shall explain things to me." The Ambassador expressed his delight at the prospect in suitable language.

The Exotic and the Major looked with distaste at their rods, but made no further remonstrance. Sacharissa noticed their dissatisfaction and comforted them with an infinitesimal suggestion of coquetry in her tone. "Remember you have to try and win my prize."

"Let me have your stick," said the Ambassador to the Exotic, who handed it to him silently.

"He didn't *forget* his rod, then," said the Man of Truth, and the Scribe smiled. He bore no malice, for he knew the Exotic.

"Why it's like a small tree," cried Sacharissa looking at the mass of oak. "What do you carry such an

enormous thing for!" she asked the Exotic.

He surveyed it with affection. "For fear I should lose it," he explained.

"What does he mean?" asked Sacharissa generally.

The Exotic answered for himself. "Well, I always know when I have got it because it is so heavy. If it wasn't, I shouldn't."

Sacharissa shook her head; the Exotic's explanations were hard to follow. "Shall we go down to the river?" she suggested.

The Scribe's glance included Sacharissa and the Ambassador. "One umpire ought to patrol each bank," he said, "so that an eye may be kept on all the competitors."

"I hardly think that will be necessary," said the Ambassador in a tone that closed the discussion.

The Poet now spoke as one who knows his subject. "I am going to get very secretly behind a tree and dabble for chevens with a grass-hopper."

Sacharissa looked to the Ambassador, who for once was obliged to confess himself at fault.

The Scribe explained. "He means dabble for chub; he has been reading *THE COMPLETE ANGLER*. There aren't any chevens in this river," he said to the Poet, "only trout."

"Well I shall dabble for them," insisted the Poet.

The Man of Truth was now in a position to correct him. "It isn't dabble," he said with warmth; "it's dible. I myself shall fish with a worm." He looked defiance at the Scribe.

"Do you allow poaching?" that gentleman asked Sacharissa.

"Oh yes," she replied in some amusement; "let them fish in any way they like."

The Mime who had been lost in

thought said suddenly in pursuance of his meditations, "Yes, it will make an effective situation."

"What will?" asked the Man of Truth.

"The scene in the new play," he returned, "in which I appear as Thor about to catch the sea-serpent. I shall study the part this afternoon."

"There aren't any sea-serpents in this river," said the Man of Truth in imitation of the Scribe.

"Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook?" quoted the Ambassador.

The Man of Truth pointed to the figure of a gardener in the distance. "May I ask him to dig me some worms?" he said.

"I should like some too," said the Exotic, "in a flower-pot." The Man of Truth hurried off to talk to the gardener while the rest strolled slowly down to the bridge. While they were waiting for his return the Scribe asked Sacharissa how far her water extended.

"About a mile altogether," she replied. "You can go up-stream as far as a little mill and down-stream as far as a ford where the lane runs through the river. You mustn't go beyond, because it belongs to the Squire and he gets very angry with trespassers."

Presently the Man of Truth reached the bridge carrying an enormous flower-pot. "I've got your pot," he said cheerfully to the Exotic, who clutched the rail of the bridge for support as he looked at it.

"I can't carry that," he protested; "and besides you haven't got one for yourself."

"Oh, here's mine," returned the Man of Truth producing a little pot which had lain concealed in the depths of the other. "You asked for a flower pot and you've got it." He put the great burden into the Exotic's

unwilling hands. "You haven't got your stick, you know," he added.

"Would that the Careful Camel were here," sighed the Exotic.

"Well, I shall go up-stream towards the mill," said the Scribe.

"I shall go down stream," murmured the Exotic. It's easier going with the current."

"So will I," agreed the Poet; "there are more trees down there for me to dabble under."

"Dibble," said the Man of Truth indignantly, as he walked off after the Scribe.

The Major lingered with Sacharissa and the Ambassador after the rest had gone and showed no signs of wishing to move until she reminded him of the important interest at stake. "You musn't let the others get a start," she said.

He was recalled to his duty, and crossing the bridge departed gloomy but determined.

Sacharissa and the Ambassador remained on the bridge. Below the ripples flashed in the sunlight as they chased one another six inches above the golden gravel. A few yards lower down the stream seemed to repent of its haste for it suddenly became much deeper and swept round in a great eddy under the bank as though it would retrace its course. Here long green weeds twined and inter-twined, yielding to the water's embrace. On the garden side a smooth bank sloped down from the bank to the river, forming a pleasant contrast to the luxuriant growth that fringed the other side. At irregular intervals willows leaned across the stream, beaten into fantastic postures by winters of storm and wind. Under their shade the water seemed to flow more quietly, and to linger before it emerged into the sunlight once more. Leaning on the rail the two listened to the soft murmur of the

shallows, and the myriad insect sounds of a summer afternoon, and watched the figures of the fishermen gradually lessening as they pursued their way down stream. "I thought so," said Sacharissa presently, laughing as she pointed with her parasol after them. The Exotic, who had started with the air of an Atlas supporting the world, was now walking comfortably upright while the Poet carried the flower-pot.

"He has elements of greatness," admitted the Ambassador.

Sacharissa looked at him from under her shady hat. "I wonder," she said thoughtfully, "if you would be carrying it if you were with him."

"I wonder"; he gave the matter polite consideration. "I am, as you see, carrying his stick."

"From interested motives," she suggested slyly.

"Well, may I carry your parasol?" he said with promptitude.

"I should not like to burden you with it," she replied.

"Indeed it would be no burden," he assured her.

"Then it would hardly be a fair test, would it?" she returned with a little triumph.

"No, it would not be a fair test," he admitted. "May I carry it?" Sacharissa disappeared behind her hat, and the Ambassador was left to contemplate the figures of his friends, which however were soon lost to sight behind a clump of willows at a bend in the stream. He called her attention to their disappearance and she bethought her of her duty.

"As we are umpires," she said, "we ought not to stay here too long. Let us go and see how they are getting on."

They left the bridge and passed along the garden path by the river until they came to a little wicket-gate opening into a meadow beyond.

"There is a lane here," she said leading the way to a stile in the left hand corner of the field, "which will take us right down to the ford I spoke of. It is the nearest way and we had better not walk along the bank, or I shall frighten the trout. It's a nice shady lane too." The Ambassador approved of the suggested route and when they reached the stile offered his hand as she stepped daintily across.

In the meanwhile all unconscious of impending umpires the Exotic lay at his ease on a grassy mound a few yards from the ford, under the shadow of an oak-tree in the hedge which divided the meadow from the lane, while before him stood three small rustics round-eyed and open-mouthed. He had apologised to the Poet for the unusual energy which had induced him to come thus far by saying that if he came as far as he could he would not be expected to go any farther. The Poet had then deposited the flower-pot and the Exotic's rod, which he was by this time carrying, under a willow, and had returned to the spot he had marked for himself. The Exotic had not been resting long when he became aware of suppressed merriment in the lane close by, and looking round had discovered three faces peeping at him over the gate behind. Swift in decision he had beckoned to the boys to approach and was addressing them as Sacharissa and the Ambassador came to the bottom of the lane. They too looked over the gate, and glanced at each other: it seemed an inappropriate moment for declaring their presence; a wild-rose bush in the hedge afforded tempting cover, and drawing back behind it they watched unsuspected.

"Children," he was saying, "I fear me that you are wholly unacquainted with the history of the Considerate

Kurd, which, if you are good, I will presently recount unto you. In the mean time know you aught concerning the nature of fishes?" No answer was forthcoming, so the Exotic patiently reconstructed his enquiry. "What, children, is a trout?"

"Fish," suggested the boldest of the three with some hesitation.

"Allah is great," admitted the Exotic. "Have you any skill in its enticement?" The question passed harmlessly over their heads. "How do you catch it?" he repeated in the vernacular.

"Worm," said the spokesman with dawning comprehension.

"Mahomed is his prophet," conceded the Exotic with relief. "Do you also in the profundity of your intelligence conceal any knowledge touching the nature of sixpence?" The word *sixpence* seemed to be known to them; they exchanged grins.

"Bribery and corruption," murmured the Ambassador to Sacharissa, who laid her hand on his arm to keep him silent.

"Be it known then," continued the Exotic, "that for every several fish I will disburse sixpence. Under that tree lie an implement and a receptacle." The Exotic waved his cigarette in the direction of the flower-pot. The children looked round in alarm, edging nervously away from the dangerous locality.

The Exotic hastened to remove the false impression. "I mean a fishing-rod and a flower-pot with worms. Go you and catch fish, and I will give sixpences."

Sacharissa's hand shook on the Ambassador's arm. "We are umpires," he reminded her in a whisper.

"Please don't interrupt," she entreated.

The boys became men of action at once; they hurried to the tree and

picked up the rod and flower-pot, while the Exotic sighed contentedly as though a weight had been taken from his mind. His gaze wandered up the stream. In the distance could be seen the Poet on his hands and knees making tentative grabs at something in the grass. Beyond him in the sunlight stood the Mime apostrophising a tree, his hands outstretched in eloquent appeal.

A thought appeared to strike the Exotic. "Stay," he said to the boys; "two of you come here. Do you see those gentlemen making their evening prayer?" he asked pointing to the figures. "Inasmuch as they are absorbed in their devotions, they have no present need for the two fishing-rods which you will find lying somewhere in their vicinity. Go and fetch them, without however unduly disturbing the gentlemen."

"As umpires," began the Ambassador in a low tone, but Sacharissa shook her head imperiously, putting one finger to her lips.

"That is well done," said the Exotic, when the boys had performed their mission successfully without attracting the notice of either the Poet or the Mime; "now go and catch fish with them." The boys presently sat down on the river bank in an obedient row.

Sacharissa pointed to the figures in the distance which were still in the same attitudes and whispered, "Come away now, I want to laugh."

When they were out of ear-shot she sat down on an old stump by the side of the lane. "I never saw anything like him," she said almost hysterically. "But I'm so sorry for the Poet," she went on. "What will he do when he finds his rod is gone? He'll be like the White Rabbit."

"He'll write a poem, I expect," the Ambassador replied, "if he ever gets as far as the discovery of his loss. At

present he still seems to be trying to catch grasshoppers." The Ambassador was standing looking over the hedge. "Can we get into the next field without being seen?" he asked. "We could watch him through the hedge if you liked, and get quite close to both of them."

"Oh yes," cried Sacharissa jumping up. "There is a gate and we can get along under the hedge."

"He is very unsuccessful, poor boy," said Sacharissa presently. The Poet, still on his hands and knees, was now not far from them. Every now and then he grabbed at some object in the grass, and after each effort he opened his hand very cautiously with a look of expectation which changed to blank surprise as he found it empty.

As she spoke however he made a last successful grab and rose in triumph. "Now I can begin to dabble," he murmured to himself, and he hurried off to the river bank. Sacharissa and the Ambassador walked quickly along under the hedge until they were almost at the river. As they got nearer they could hear the voice of the Mime declaiming.

"O watery monster, whose unending coils—" he spouted and the Poet broke in. "Have you seen my rod anywhere about?" he asked.

"No," answered the Mime shortly. "O watery monster—" he began again, but the interruption had put him out and he was compelled to stop and search his memory. "O watery monster—" he repeated several times, and then the Poet interrupted him anew. "I wonder if I brought it," he said. "Do you remember seeing if I had it with me when I came?"

"No, I don't," returned the Mime with impatience. "Go away and don't interrupt. O watery monster—"

Sacharissa looked appealingly at



the Ambassador. The hedge was thick at this point and just too high to see over. He understood. "Stand on that stump and lean on my shoulder," he suggested, putting an obtrusive spray of honeysuckle gently aside.

She was now able to see what was happening in the next meadow. The Mime was standing in an attitude of tragic meditation with his right hand to his brow and his left hand supporting his elbow, racking his brains. He had completely lost his context.

"You were quite right," she whispered to the Ambassador as she looked at the Poet. "He is sitting under a willow with his notebook on his knee and is trying to find his pencil." Her eye travelled to the other end of the field. "The Exotic is asleep, I think, and I can only see two of the boys."

"They won't catch many fish," she said as she stepped down. "I could stay and watch them for ever, but we really must go and look at the others."

"Yes our duty as umpires must not be neglected," he agreed.

"You are very conscientious," she answered with slight feminine scorn of male ideas of duty.

"I am your very obedient servant," he returned, "and you told me I was an umpire"; but his glance fell harmlessly on her hat. Perhaps it was for this reason that he added, "Otherwise I should not have known it."

"We mustn't be too strict," she said gently as they strolled along the bank of the stream.

"Do you think we have been?" he asked with a smile.

"No," she was compelled to admit; "but I think you are inclined to be."

"You would very soon spoil them," he said.

"I should like to try," she laughed. Her eyes flashed with merriment as she looked at him. "Will you give them to me? I would have a big nursery,—no, I mean a studio built for them, and let them do nothing but play."

"You would want someone to look after them," suggested the Ambassador giving the idea his consideration.

"The Major," she said suddenly as a voice on the other bank reached them from behind a clump of trees. It said *damn* twice very distinctly.

"He would not be able to manage them," objected the Ambassador keeping to the topic.

"Oh, I didn't mean that," she said very quickly with a little distressed blush; "I meant that was his voice. I expect he is in difficulties. Please stop him before he becomes too military."

The Ambassador coughed audibly.

"Oh, I say," shouted the voice, "you might unhook my fly will you? It's hung up on that beastly bush." The Ambassador stepped up to the bush and released the fly. "Thanks, awfully," said the Major. "Of all the infernal—" He checked himself as he caught sight of Sacharissa. "I find the river a bit too small," he said apologetically.

"It isn't very big," she agreed; "have you caught anything?"

"Only one fingerling," said the Major with some despondence.

She comforted him. "I don't think they've caught anything down below, so you needn't despair." The Major brightened a little at this and began to fish with renewed energy as they left him.

Before them lay a hedge with a gap in it and also a stile a little out of their course. The Ambassador led the way towards the stile. "Oh we needn't go all that way," said Sacharissa; "we can get through

this gap." The Ambassador made an admirable pretence of having noticed the gap for the first time. "So we can," he said, removing a bramble with his stick and holding back some twigs while she stepped through.

They now found themselves in the first meadow again, and crossing it they re-entered the garden by the wicket-gate. "We must go over the bridge and up the other bank," she said.

They had not to walk very far before they found the objects of their search. At a bend in the river, where the water after fifty yards of rippling shallow formed a deep pool under some bushes, the Man of Truth was sitting, with his rod resting on a bush and his line in the water, smoking a pipe. Behind him in the meadow stood the Scribe with his rod over his shoulder looking contemptuously down at some object in the grass. "Is that your idea of a fish?" he asked.

"Yes," replied the Man of Truth without turning his head. "It's a trout. It took a very large worm and swallowed it."

"Lucky the proceeding wasn't reversed," said the Scribe.

"Well, you haven't got a trout at all," retorted the Man of Truth.

"If that is a trout," said the Scribe, "I'm pleased to say I have not."

Sacharissa and the Ambassador had by this time reached the disputants. The Scribe pointed silently to the diminutive fish in the grass. "He's doing his best to win the prize," he remarked.

"Is that a fingerling?" asked Sacharissa. "The Major said he had caught one."

"Yes," said the Scribe, "that is a fingerling. In time it would possibly have become a trout."

"It is a trout," said the Man of Truth vehemently.

The Ambassador called the Scribe's attention to a fish rising under the other bank some distance higher up. "Yes, do catch it," urged Sacharissa.

"It's only a small one," said the Scribe, but he consented to make the attempt. Advancing cautiously a few yards up stream he dropped on one knee and began to lengthen his line.

"It's very pretty to watch," murmured Sacharissa to the Ambassador as the line and rod swept backwards and forwards in graceful curves through the air.

The Scribe by this time had a sufficient length of line, so he suffered the fly to fall on the water at the next cast. It dropped as lightly as a real insect about two feet above the spot where the trout had risen and floated down with the stream. Then there was a dimple on the surface of the water and the fly disappeared. A slight movement of the fore-arm showed that the Scribe was ready for this and at once a trout jumped out of the water firmly hooked.

"I knew it was only a little thing," he said winding in his line.

"Oh dear, you've thrown it in again," cried Sacharissa when the fish had been landed and inspected.

"It was too small to keep," he assured her.

"But it was much bigger than this," she persisted pointing to the Man of Truth's trout. "You won't get the prize," she added, a little piqued.

"I love honour more," quoted the Scribe smiling at her. Sacharissa looked at him curiously.

"He is quite right," said the Ambassador. "On a dry-fly stream one ought not to keep anything under three quarters of a pound."

"I suppose you know best," she said not in the least convinced.

*(To be continued.)*

## IN PRAISE OF THE SPADE.

WHEN our hostess has presented me with charming vagueness as a digger in the Levant, and we are between fish and fowl, you are sure to ask, dear lady, for what do I dig, and with a glance at my hands, if it be not a tedious trade in that climate. And no sooner is it avowed that I dig vicariously, and (with some shame) that I could not do the spade-work myself for half a day, you pass to a question which embarrasses me not a little, why so do I spend my time? I might frame you platitudes on the absolute value of all knowledge, or that relative importance which a knowledge of antiquity has in the understanding of modern life; but I suspect, if ever you give a thought to ancient history at all, that it seems to you, as to an old sceptic of your sex whom I knew once, by-gones that had best be by-gone. Nor may I reply, with garbled irreverence, that I dig because I am ashamed to beg; for apart from this, that I am not in fact ashamed to beg (or little enough digging had I done), it must not be implied that I dig to live,—*suggestio falsi*! Neither lucre, alas, nor much meed of fame is to be earned by such a spade in a society which bears hardly with archæology as an academic pastime for mild men, mistrusting it the while not a little for an officious inquisitor of family traditions. Therefore I usually take refuge in a change of subject, to your manifest relief, and indeed to my own; for in that company, and beneath those lights, I might convince myself as little as you. And, indeed, it is not till I find myself in the solitude of the

desert, and under the stars which crowned the Egyptian Goddess of Night, that I feel equal to justifying the digging trade.

Have you ever felt the lust of loot, the fierce joy of treasure-trove, and reaping that you did not sow? It is akin to the joy of all sportsmen, of the waiter on chance, or even of a skilful gambler, who may play with Fortune while she plays with him. Loot has supplied on occasion the dominant passion to all sorts and conditions of men in all ages, from the tribal warfare in the dawn of time to that concerted triumph of civilisation which we lately witnessed in China. The desire of it has covered the seas with pirates, and the land with filibusters. There are certain periods of history during which it supplies the one sufficient key to recorded human action,—those recurring epochs of mercenary militarism, when all the best blood of the best nations in the world was poured out under alien banners; when men made a trade of fighting as naturally as they till or huckster now; when not honour or discipline, any more than patriotism, outweighed the instinct to preserve what had been gained by bow and spear. So it was in the Hellenistic age after the death of the great Alexander, when the manhood of Macedonia and Greece roamed the world year in and year out, cumbered with a growing booty, and depositing it under the shadow of every king in turn. So too it was in that medieval epoch of the Grand Companies, and of our early wars with France. Hope

of loot is stronger than even a certainty of hardship and death. It fed the Roman legions in the West with Gauls and Germans, long after Italy had ceased to man them; and in the Eastern Empire it supplied the vital element to a long series of mercenary corps from the Varangian Guard to the Mamelukes of our grandfathers' day and the Hamidieh Horse of our own. Place civilised men for however short a time without the scope of their own social code,—and how many will keep within the Decalogue? If few unchain the animal in them to rape or slaughter, yet fewer will hold their hands from a general loot.

I find not a little of this natural joy of thieving in the pleasurable excitement of a digger's life. Whatever his scientific purpose, and however certain it be that what he may find shall not be converted to his own pecuniary gain, I suspect his actual emotion, at the moment when a breach is made in a virgin and furnished sepulchre of old time, is not to be distinguished from that with which French and British soldiers once entered the Summer Palace of the Manchu Emperors. It is a joy without prevision of any sequel, a joy of instantly possessing oneself of a treasure ready made, the first joy of the finder of a nugget, the joy of loot.

Not too noble a joy, you will say, dear lady. I grant it you; but on an Egyptian mound I am not concerning myself with the nobility or even the morality of a digger's joys. At best they are all somewhat egotistic. But simply as joys, right or wrong, I would expatiate on them without prejudice. Some of them may not easily be conceived to pertain to archæology. Not that I suppose one of your sex to want understanding of the gambler's joy; nor again of the second joy (which

indeed includes the first) the joy of acquisition and possession. But you may wonder how these joys should ever come to one who grubs vicariously in damp mould for broken things that are often enough of no beauty or intrinsic value; and the more since the digger is seldom licensed to impound anything he finds, but must hand it over to some impersonal administration, in which he has no part or lot.

Know, however, that the digger, like every discoverer, does realise himself sufficiently in whatsoever things he finds, to have a great and keen joy of them. First in that they are his, being trophies of his own bow and spear, found by means fashioned by himself to that end, by men trained to a difficult labour under his eye, found perhaps as a result of his happy reasoning or surmise, or at any rate as the result of a chain of circumstances, in whose forging he has been chief smith. And this further—there is in a sense an actual proprietorship of the scientific substance, if not the material value, claimed by the discoverer and accredited to him by the courtesy of nations. As he has had first sight and knowledge of his finds, so it is always conceded that he shall be first to acquaint others with their nature, usually enjoying for a term of years the exclusive right to their study. And in the event of anything of novelty or great excellence among them being taken by science for a type, this will be associated more or less with his name, if not so indissolubly and grotesquely as might a new variety of herb or beast by the coupling of his genitive in barbaric Latin. In fine there is sufficient identification of a digger with any object that his labourers reveal, for the gambler's anticipation of possession and the complacency

of secure acquisition to arise within him and endure reflection. And perhaps after all he is seldom conscious of any very definite lust of possession, but only desires success, to escape miscarriage of his prophecies and plans, and to hold his head high among his rivals.

This joy of self-realisation some, that I have known, have had far more right than others to feel; but I have never observed the corresponding measure in any digger's joy, certainly not in my own, for I derive as keen a pleasure from my most facile fortune as the most laborious of trackers. And so do all who follow the molish trade. You might suppose a digger would plume himself in inverse ratio to the bulk of what he finds, and take most pride in the tiny and delicate things which a touch of the pick-head annihilates and no eye but the most vigilant and best instructed may spy in the dust or slime,—scraps of evanescent papyrus, for example, or friable clay-sealings, of less than a nail's breadth. And so diggers speak and write of themselves. But, believe me, at the moment of discovery the swelling and strutting is all for the huge immovable things, those landlord's fixtures of antiquity, which an elephant could not crush, nor a blind man fail to find,—the altars, the thrones, the colossal statues. And a world, which has little time or mind for small print, or small pictures, or any sort of minuteness, encourages us by basing what approval it can spare on these gross things. Clear out some great temple in Herculean fashion, shoot all the records of its history, that have fallen from the walls and become embedded in the slow rising silt, to the river or the rubbish mound,—all, at least, that your diggers, better instructed, have not privily rescued and sold to the first comer—and you will have

praise from more than the guide-books, and be held blameless, even if the new-bared pillars totter and fall, or the new-stripped walls be defiled and defaced. But turn over the silt, sifting it laboriously to note the position of the smallest jetsam of antiquity it contains, and probing it even to the secrets of the foundation stones, and thereafter leave it to protect and support what it has established for centuries,—and where will be your honour?

And now for the most subtle and exquisite of a digger's joys, one, however, which varies infinitely in quality with the circumstances under which discovery is made, and the sensitiveness of the discoverer. Few persons, diggers or not, appear altogether insensible to the mystery of antiquity. It seems to touch a chord in the nature of all women, but the chord vibrates most in the nature of some men. At its dullest the sensation is not greatly different from any idle curiosity of the brain; but in imaginative temperaments it can stimulate a yearning hunger of the soul, unlike any other. I could conceive that with a feeling of a like kind, seeing the spirit of a dead man, one would crave a word from the silent lips. For fragments of antiquity suggest the veil which is drawn over dead life, and awake an insatiate desire to lift its hem and see ages that were, and the life of men now dust,—life one with ours, but most unlike it, led by beings who were our fathers, but are strange to us: as men from another star. Sometimes in the opening of a forgotten desk or a long closed room, one seems in everyday life to catch a momentary glimpse behind this veil; but the digger has the better chance. If he never break into a hidden chamber and see a crowned and sceptred king crumbling to dust



at the breath of the upper air,—so all good Alexandrians believe that Arab masons, working in the basement of the mosque of the Prophet Daniel, once saw the great Macedonian—he will let the first light into many a tomb and be first to take up the lamp that the last mourner laid at the feet of the dead. In a sealed sepulchre of hard rock one may even find the bearers' footprints in the dust of the floor.

Once, and once only, have I felt this sensation to the full; and not for a minute only, to be presently dispelled by the light and the movement of day, but for days together. It was in the lower hall of the cave on Mount Dicte, in fretted stalactite aisles whose dim niches still held undisturbed the votive offerings placed in them by reverent Cretan suppliants, dead and gone three thousand years. But you have heard that tale, and I need but add now that it was the one experience in real life which has given me as keen a thrill as any fantasy in romance,—any fantasy of a surviving society or a sealed sanctuary of a bygone age, discovered beyond mountain, forest, desert, or sea, by some strayed tracker. The demand for such tales is nearly as old as man. Legends of ancient kings, not dead but entranced in secret chambers, seen suddenly by an intruder to his own undoing; legends of mountains in medieval Christendom, that opened and closed on pagan orgies, and the yet living gods of the heathen Greeks; legends of lost Atlantis, of the Wandering Jew, of Rip Van Winkle,—all these owe their evergreen fascination to the sense of the mystery of antiquity. This gives awe and emotional efficacy to saintly relics; it keeps folk-lore stocked with buried fanes, paved in silver and roofed in gold, where priests still offer the burnt sacrifice

or the mass, and with drowned abbeyes, whose bells chime through the waves on vigils and festivals. And, though you know it not, it inspires you, dear lady, when I show a relic of antiquity, to ask me at once how old it may be, and to pitch your interest high or low according as I allow it a millennium more or less.

Perhaps it is not over good for weaker brains, this mystery of antiquity, this glimpse into the world of Anamnesis. It seems to fill all such with some vague assurance that the veil that hangs beyond the grave, as well as that which hangs before the tomb, may be lifted altogether. You must have met,—for who has not?—one of those readers of futurity by the half comprehended lore of the past, fatuous gropers in prophecy, Anglo-Israelites, Pyramid-Maniacs, men crazed by symbols and numbers. One such I recall now, who is gone where he may learn the secrets that he never wrung from the pyramids. He once made a journey of near a hundred miles in Egypt, good part of it on foot, unattended, with too much tumult in his poor brain to let him catch a word of the vernacular or even the value of the current coinage, of which his donkey-boys and native entertainers robbed him at every turn. And all to ask me and others how many steps we counted on a certain pyramid. He had tramped the last six miles out into the desert at high semi-tropic noon, most fearfully clad in silk hat, voluminous woollen scarf and frock coat, to whose tail-buttons was slung a telescope; but he would neither eat nor drink till he had asked that momentous question about the steps. And when we owned that we had never counted them at all, and indeed were not over sure which was the pyramid in question, we had all the ado in the world to

induce him to break bread in our company. And the only atonement we could make was covertly to send packing the rascal boy who had guided and fleeced him, and to put the poor old gentleman, whether he wished it or no, in charge of a trusty Bedouin of our own, who saw him safe again to the rail-head.

Into the joy of mystery I have little doubt, dear lady, you can enter to the full. But even should you belong to the practical and matter-of-fact minority of your sex, you may still sympathise with it as a joy of discovering relics of your own racial childhood. You cannot but have some sense of collective egotism, the same in kind as that passion which impels some men to spend their lifetime in elucidating their proper genealogy, and all to enquire curiously about the initial phase of their own lives for which their memory is blank. Who has not cross-examined his mother on her memories of his babyhood and childhood? Who has not lingered over the yellow letters he first penned and first received? Collective egotism is only less universal and cogent than individual, because the self is more diffused. An interest less intimate will be felt in the records of one's family than of oneself, in those of the city than of the family, in those of the nation than of the city, in those of the world than of the nation. But some collective egotism we all have, you, I, and the rest.

Such are what I may call proper Joys of the Spade. But, for all their intensity they are not those which go for most in the choice of a digger's life, for they depend on his success and the measure of it in a lottery whence far more blanks than winning tickets are to be drawn. But there is yet another pleasure, less essential to the trade, but a far surer outcome of it.

The digger on classic soil is in a position of peculiar advantage, not easily to be shared by those who follow other callings. In the search for ground, whereon to ply his spade, he must go up and down the land and to its inmost recesses, wherein since husbandmen, shepherds, and woodcutters are his only guides to success, he will come into contact with the most simple and primitive folk, and be forced to learn enough of their speech and habit of thought to maintain direct communication with them. Moreover he is an employer of labour, not working for his pecuniary gain, but hiring the peasants to the lightest and the most interesting work known in their lives; and albeit he may have command of official funds and usually of official help, he is not himself of the Government, or one before whom the mask must be always worn. Lastly his general education and his special training make him sensitive and observant, beyond perhaps other men who come to equally close quarters with the poorer folk.

His, then, will be the animal joy of reversion to racial childhood, being nothing less than the satisfaction of that instinct of treachery to civilisation which possesses all healthy children and takes their fathers to a tent on Thames bank, or to a yawl on the East Anglian Broads, or to an Alpine shelter, and yourself, dear lady, to whom no better amateur savagery is permitted, to the precarious pleasures of a picnic. For which unreasonable desire, strongest in the Anglo-Saxon kindred, let me say in passing that I have often tried to find reason. If it be more than some obscure instinct of heredity, perhaps it is a purely egotistic passion, a phase of the universal lust for realising the self. That combination and division of labour,

which are found in civilisation, are more satisfactory to the community than to the individual, who in the ruder life alone finds exercise for certain of his natural powers. To kill his food and himself prepare it; to rise and lie down with the sun; to be self-sufficient, dispensing with the service of another's hands; to have neither roof, nor couch, nor abundant clothing,—to find that he can live thus and live well, subtly elates the natural man, giving him pride of himself and assurance that he will stand foursquare to every wind of chance. The less our clothing of civilisation the higher our spirits, and we should probably stand happiest before heaven as Adam stood ere he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. And the natural man rejoices too, to be relieved from the pressure of a complex social code and the infinite trifles of observance which go for so much in the duty to one's neighbour in that higher life of yours. No sooner, therefore, has he left his own soil, than he always sloughs as much of its convention as

he dare, and indulges in many a petty barbarism among hospitable foreign folk.

But there is still a greater joy; for a digger is so placed that he watches at his ease strange human societies, unveiled and unashamed, in the setting of mountain and stream which has made them what they are, and among the visible records of their predecessors and their parents in the land. I do not mean that the digger usually does, or indeed can, live with these societies as they live. His trade is too remote from their intelligence, the energy he must use too foreign to their nature. But he can live beside them and breathe their simple natural atmosphere, and therein find full compensation for a life which otherwise might not come quite kindly to a young Briton, sound in wind and limb. For, be his training and theory what they may, the racial instinct for physical emulation will out in the Anglo-Saxon, who in his heart probably seldom sets most store by the fame of a scholar.

D. G. HOGARTH.

FANNY BURNEY.<sup>1</sup>

LUCIAN says somewhere that if Greece were stripped of her mythology all her showmen would die of starvation, since foreign enthusiasts are not interested in the bare truth. But what of domestic enthusiasts? Do not they care about the bare truth, if only they can have enough of it and get the right showmen? Let a modern letter-writer answer for us: "Meetings (with friends) in the wilds are very well; but to be where men have been before us, great men, good men, to subtend our *excursus* by an enlightened consciousness (provided by the showman) of *res et personæ*—Oh how glorious!"

It is many years since those who value the *res et personæ* of the eighteenth century began to regard Mr. Austin Dobson as the showman in whom they could repose the most absolute confidence, as one who would miss no detail of historic interest, however slight, and yet not ignore unsympathetically the mythology of the period. For an accurate chronicler of letters has much mythology to get rid of, and it is important for him not merely to carry conviction by the fulness of his destructive knowledge but to show that he,

Like the Egyptian thief at point of  
death  
Kills what he loves.

There is a good example of this in Mr. Dobson's latest piece of biography. No. 1, St. Martin Street, where Fanny

Burney began her "scribbling," was at one time the residence of Newton, and it was a tradition much prized by the Burneys. The *scriptorium* was indeed believed to be his observatory, and the house to have been built by him. The last belief had no sort of authority, and the first not much plausibility; but both are recorded, and it is not only conceded that two editions of the *PRINCIPIA* were produced while Newton lived in St. Martin Street, but Mr. Dobson even speaks (doubtless with a reminiscence of her own vocabulary) of the "*respectable traditions*" belonging to "Fanny's chosen retreat."

Fanny had other *scriptoria*. In her stepmother's house at Lynn there was a long side garden with a lookout at the end which was called the cabin, and there she wrote till driven in by the profane language of the sea-faring population, for the Ouse ran close by. Captain Mirvan in EVELINA had so many other repelling things about him that Fanny thought it unnecessary to reproduce his dialect literally, but it was not, it seems, from unfamiliarity with such emphasis as it provided.

The third place of scribbling was "the ever dear Chessington," the home of the family friend "Daddy" Crisp. The whole Burney family filled Chessington Hall from time to time "with the stir and bustle of their fresh and healthy vitality"; but it was "Fannikin" who was the great pet. How much he did for her with his wise counsel and full sympathy, how much he did for all of them

<sup>1</sup> FANNY BURNEY. By Austin Dobson. English Men of Letters. London: 1903.

is sufficiently proved by the grateful affection with which one and all regarded him; but, as Mr. Dobson happily puts it, "their company must have been invaluable to a host contracted, but by no means wedded, to melancholy."

It is worth while,—at least for those who care for EVELINA and CECILIA—to dwell a moment on the services rendered to Fanny by one whom she had every reason to regard as a second father. The literary failure which had caused his retirement and given him a sort of melancholy,—Gray's phrase *white melancholy* would be a better name for it, when there were any Burneys at Chessington—had not made him lose his interest in letters. Like not a few of his betters he was an admirable critic of work which he himself had tried without success. He could not indeed "win the mistress," but, happily for Fanny, he had not "wooed the maid" in vain. One need only glance at his advice about letter-writing,—it sounds like an unpublished letter of Cowper's on Cowper's own subject—to see how priceless to a young student of literature such a mentor must have been. "Stiffness and study" are the two epistolary vices. Fanny is "never to think about being correct or running in smooth periods or nicely grammatical,"—it is a pity, by the way, that she took this advice too literally for the grammar of CAMILLA is far from nice—"Dash away whatever comes uppermost"; Cowper would have added, "everything is subject enough to those we love."

Had the counsel about "smooth periods" been followed, the daws of criticism would have had fewer things to peck at in CECILIA, and CAMILLA would not have been choked with verbiage, but found readable by others besides "the fanatics of the

out-of-date." It is not too much to say that CAMILLA, as we know it, would not have seen the light, had Daddy Crisp lived. He did not conceal his opinion that Fanny's comedy was a failure, and he pointed out beforehand with admirable lucidity where her strength lay, and, while admitting the possibility of a success in comedy, how little scope there was on the stage for that leisurely variety which made so much of her charm in EVELINA. When one thinks of such a godfather in authorship as Daddy Crisp (at one time both man of the world and man of fashion, travelled man and man of letters), when one recalls all the varied company received at her father's house (the sister with a Parisian education, the brother who had sailed with Captain Cook), when one knows that her diary began early, and that six or twelve quarto pages of incident and sentiment, feeling and observation were posted to this godfather at regular intervals, we feel, as Mr. Dobson makes us feel, that the "preparations of the dawn," the dawn of a new novelist, are fairly complete, nor are we surprised that the recipient of the quarto pages is aware of a special gift, or to hear the tribute, "Fanny, you paint well." Fanny, moreover, had studied contemporary fiction, both French and English; not only the truly contemporary and inferior fiction, but Richardson and Sterne, THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD, and RASSELAS dear to her youth as to George Eliot's. But she had had more than reading,—she had had at least one professed lover, and like the Platonic physician had qualified for her diploma by experience.

No 1, St. Martin Street, was an ideal place for a showman, and ours is at his best there. What better introduction to the human comedy



could there be than to have jostled in one's recollections the gentle (Otaheitan) savage with that "most entertaining of mortals Mr. Garrick," Hermes Harris with Abyssinian Bruce, Sir Joshua with Prince Orloff, the great soprano with the unmusical lexicographer, Nollekens with Mrs. Thrale? One wonders if Nollekens was told of Orloff's helping to strangle the Emperor Peter, and if here, too, he used his famous phrase, "That's his brag!" It is no wonder that Fanny's stores of social experience at twenty-five seemed to Horace Walpole something wonderful.

The story of how *EVELINA* came to be written is familiar, and when that phoenix rose from the ashes of earlier creations, the novelty of it was the situation of a young lady embarrassed with two sets of relations one vulgar and one aristocratic. But the chief part of the novelty lay in the clever handling of frank vulgarity, and that made the success of the book, for the recognised types of the fashionable world were then somewhat outworn. Nevertheless Mr. Dobson will have the sympathy of most readers when he contends that the third volume is most easily and least tediously written, is in fact the pleasantest part of the story. One is tempted to say that the praise awarded to Sir Clement Willoughby is hardly strong enough, if it were not the height of audacity to question Mr. Dobson's estimate of the plausibilities of the eighteenth century; certainly those critics who compare Sir Clement with Sir Hargrave Pollexfen or Mr. Greville are "a foul way out." He is more interesting and agreeable in a sense in which they could never claim the epithet; also he has no painful Richardsonian moral written large across him.

There are three delicious testimonies to the success of *EVELINA*

which one must bid readers look out for; Cumberland's devouring jealousy, Johnson's felicitous reference to Madame Duval, and Mrs. Thrale's letter from Bath where the lively lady tells how "the puppy men" admired Fanny's drooping air and timid intelligence,—or a timid air I think it was and a drooping intelligence. Feline indeed this, as Fanny's biographer says.

An interval of four years separated *EVELINA* from *CECILIA*, and there is no manner of doubt, whatever may be said as to the superior freshness of the first, that the second novel is a maturer piece of work, that there is far more variety of interest in it, and even an abundance of cleverness. Miss Burney was primarily a character-monger as Johnson said, and the weakness of her characters, as Mr. Dobson points out, is that they are too easily "labelled with defining adjectives," too easily run into types to the detriment of their individuality. Burke objected that her stage was too crowded, and her characters too numerous, but he wrapped this criticism in a compliment, perhaps the most splendid she ever received: "I fear it is quite in vain to preach economy to those who are come young to excessive opulence." With all its defects, this compliment is deserved; it is opulence that is suggested by the many bright scenes and the succession of characters. It is also much to Miss Burney's credit that she studied vulgarity in the concrete with as much care as she did the fashionable world, though sometimes with a grotesque effect she did not intend. Mr. Dobson quotes a superb criticism of Hobson, the builder, on the declamatory philanthropist Mr. Albany: "Might the gentlemen be speaking something by heart?" Is it too much to hope that this is a piece of self-criticism,

and that Fanny, wearied by her man of virtue, permitted herself a gleam of irony?

There is only space to glance at *CAMILLA*, the last of the novels which, in Macaulay's opinion, Fanny's admirers should read; but "fanatics of the out-of-date" must be allowed a word after "conscientiously struggling through it." The pomposity of its sententiousness is so intolerable that after hearing in the opening pages that the "blest and blessing pair [*Camilla's* parents] educated a lovely race with that expansive propriety which unites improvement for the future with present enjoyment," one is tempted to send the book flying. This would be a mistake, for not only is Sir Hugh Tyrold as benevolently amusing as George Eliot's Mr. Brooke in a more ignorant sort of way, and occasionally really pathetic, but Mrs. Arlbery to whom, alas, Mr. Dobson does not vouchsafe a word is as entertaining a figure as any modern novel could provide. Any one who like the Vicar of Wakefield is "tired of being always wise," anyone who recovers an intermitted friendship because one of her own good things is quoted to her, makes a welcome diversion in Miss Burney's pages, where the inevitable epithet and the characters who are always on duty earning it are such a trial. Yet when all is said, the book is worth a struggle.

Mr. Dobson thinks the *Diary* worth all the novels. It must no doubt as a literary performance rank above them, but all who choose to hold a brief for *EVELINA* and *CECILIA* will find themselves in most illustrious company, the best that the eighteenth century could provide.

But if Fanny's experiences at twenty-five were out of the common, they were destined to further enlargement by her exaltation to a

dizzy height of dulness. The story of the Queen's Dresser is indeed a melancholy chronicle, though an interesting one; but neither the friendship of Mrs. Delany, nor the permission to see the trial of Warren Hastings, nor even "the memorable present gown—the lilac tabby," presented by the Queen and admired by the King could offer any lasting solace for the monotonous lengths of days during which "*Cerbera*" alternated between the "meanest petty tyrannies and amiability as profuse as it was unpalatable." The one thing of permanent value was the cordial appreciation of the King and Queen, and that was never lost. Fanny's friend Mr. Twining, the accomplished scholar and musician who translated Aristotle's *POETICS*, wrote her a most delightful letter of congratulation on her appointment, a letter individual enough for any of the great letter-writers. He is much pleased with "the manner of it,—it is so handsome," and he "thinks he sees a heap of pleasant circumstances"; but he does not fail to forecast the fashion of evils not at all uncertain. He will never see her again at St. Martin's Street, she will be so taken up with her royal mistress. His best chance will be for Fanny to get him made a bishop, and then he can come to dine with her. He also reminds her that Plutarch says some pursue fame like rowers in a boat with their back to it, and wonders if she does. Here, however, Fanny and Mr. Dobson are at one, both agreeing that her vein was worked out, and that we owe the court no grudge on this score. Certainly the most lenient critics of *CAMILLA* will not contend that it heightened her reputation. It did, however, fill her purse in a surprising manner. No such subscription-list had been seen, says Mr. Dobson, since Prior's day. That prefixed to

Mrs. Carter's *EPICETUS* would come to about two-thirds of it; Mrs. Carter, to be sure, could not count on the King's friends, but her literary friends make a fine show. *CAMILLA*'s successor is chiefly interesting as one of the veritable curiosities of literature. For the unreadable and unread *WANDERER* "some one received £7,000 in the same year that Constable could not risk more than £700 for the copyright of *WAVERLEY*." It was the year moreover of *MANSFIELD PARK* and *PATRONAGE*.

The last half of Fanny Burney's life includes her bad novels, her worse play, and her happy marriage. Of the first enough perhaps has been said; of the second it is enough to say that not even Mrs. Siddons could save *EDWY AND ELGIVA* from failure, so "incurable was the poverty of its stilted language." It is plausibly suggested that much dealing in indifferent blank verse accounts for the style of the later novels. As to the third, General D'Arblay is pronounced by his wife's biographer to be one of the most delightful figures in her Diary. He is a real Cincinnatus among his cabbages in their days of poverty, always cheerful, patient, and dignified. Fanny playfully called him Abdolonyme, after the royal gardener of whom Cowley sings, to whom Alexander vainly offered a crown (a comedy by de Fontenelles, it seems, supplied the name); but her regard did not exhaust itself in pet names, and the tender affection of her married life, for the husband and son, both of whom

she outlived, is as genuine as her feeling for Daddy Crisp, nor is there any suspicion of those appropriate emotions which disfigure the novels.

It is in its facility that the Diary rises superior to the novels, but Mr. Dobson admits a little effort in the narrative of Warren Hastings's trial; and in the last volume, in a most thrilling description of her escape from drowning at Ilfracombe, the infection of the novels is seen just where a terrible reality might be supposed to have made such a taint impossible. There is the trail of the novelist certainly in such phrases as "a confinement the term of which is unknown," "where volition is set aside," and so forth.

Macaulay perhaps did not praise Fanny Burney's Diary adequately, but is it fair to say that he is responsible for the largest part of her reputation as a novelist? She naturally filled a larger space in her day in the world of novelists (a poor world), but she did a new and definite thing and a good thing,—and the thing is still good. As has been already said, in the worst of the three novels by which she is to be judged she produced a character bright enough to set up half-a-dozen geniuses of our own day. But no lover of Mr. Dobson's favourite century can leave him with a carping word. If it is permissible to quote *CAMILLA* again, we may truly say of his literary teaching that it unites (as we fondly hope) "improvement for the future with [unquestionable] present enjoyment."

SIDNEY T. IRWIN.

## THE WILD WHITE HERD.

Oh wild white cattle, feeding past  
 With noses to the nor'land blast  
     And quick eyes keeping guard,  
 What story bring ye from the years,  
 What challenges, what wild-eyed fears  
     To thrill a modern bard ?

White cattle ! From their forests green  
 What wonders have your grandsires seen  
     When all the herd ran free,  
 And fed the marshes breast to breast,  
 And ruled the woodlands east and west  
     From sea to open sea ?

How often in dim days of yore,  
 When woods their virgin glory wore,  
     Your sires on some green plain  
 Have heard the sacrificial moan  
 Of Druids round their altar-stone  
     That wooed their gods in vain—

How often, wandering in the glade  
 Unturned of plough, untouched of spade,  
     Have heard with twitching ears  
 Soft Saxon music played and sung,  
 The reed-pipe and the minstrel tongue  
     Of those first Island years !

From some tall headland scarred and gray  
 The wild bulls looked upon the bay  
     And watched the galleys ground,  
 And saw the eagles toss and tower,  
 Proud emblems of the Purple Power  
     That held the wide world bound.

With fiery snort, with restless stamp,  
 They watched the lordly legions tramp  
     Inland on conquering stride ;  
 Then, trembling, turned in wrath and dread,  
 And so, with lowering frontlets sped  
     Back to their woodlands wide.

*The Wild White Herd.*

There was no brute but owned their sway,  
No forest band but gave them way,  
    And none their strength withstood;  
No man e'er bound them to the yoke,  
But free they ran 'neath English oak  
    As fitted English blood.

And as they roamed o'er hill and dell  
They fought, and aye the weakest fell,  
    The strongest loved and led;  
And in the groves of flowering thorn  
The snow-white haifer calves were born,  
    The Island bulls were bred.

No horseman now shall match his pride  
Against your gallop, stride for stride,  
    Each striving for the lead,  
But through the fern from year to year  
The pheasant and the fallow-deer  
    Shall follow as ye feed.

No hunter now with yew-bow strung  
And keen blade at his girdle hung  
    Shall track ye for renown,  
But here and there some artist wait,  
Or poet at your woodland gate  
    To mark your wild ways down.

White cattle! By tower'd Chillinghame  
Still throbs the blood no time can tame;  
    The fence that round you rings  
May keep you from your empire wide,  
But cannot bar you from your pride  
    And heritage of kings.



## THE ALIEN IMMIGRANT.

A VERY well-marked characteristic of human history is that which has been called the rhythmical motion of opinion. The pendulum of thought and emotion swings first in one direction, reaches its zenith, declines, and begins to swing the other way. Of this fact the present trend of English public opinion seems to afford an illustration. During the greater part of the nineteenth century all the forces that make for liberty, the centrifugal forces, so to speak, were allowed their full sway; now, those that make for concentration, the centripetal forces, are beginning to predominate. There is, for instance, the widely expressed desire for an exclusive and self-sufficing empire; a desire, which, whatever else may be thought of it, is incompatible with Free Trade in the full sense of the term. Not less significant is the out-spoken demand for restrictions upon alien immigration. It is as though sated with freedom the British were determined, for the present at least, to limit its expansion. In a word, the fall of the pendulum is already perceptible.

Anyone conversant with English history will not be slow to perceive that the alien immigrant has been an element of great importance in our national development. At an early period in our annals he began from various motives to be attracted to our shores. To the allurements of gain and self-interest was added the spur of religious persecution, till already in the sixteenth century the flow of immigration had reached comparatively large proportions, and

and England had begun to be, as Defoe called her, "the eternal refuge of the vagabond." Three distinct lines of movement can be traced. First, in the sixteenth century came the Flemish and Walloons. Next, in the following century the stream was greatly swollen by the expulsion of the Huguenots from France, and by the Dutch who came in the train of William the Third. Lastly, towards the end of the eighteenth century came the Royalist *émigrés* driven on by the French revolutionary forces; so that for three hundred years or more the question of the alien has been constantly an insistent one in England. Even in Bacon's time it seems to have occupied the serious attention of thinking men; for he observes in one of his essays that "all states that are liberal of naturalisation are fit for empire," a remark that an Imperialist race would do well to consider. It may be of some interest to inquire what were the special difficulties and problems created by the immigration, the influences thereby exerted upon politics and society, and whether the record of the past has any application to the present.

It is in the first place to be observed that from the beginning the presence of foreigners was regarded with considerable aversion. Even in 1517 there was an outbreak of the London apprentices against the foreign population on the first of May, a date which in consequence became known as Evil May Day. The dislike arose partly from sentiment and partly from the stress of competition.

Even in the reign of Queen Elizabeth it is remarkable that there were complaints of over-crowding, and by order of the Privy Council aliens were compelled to disperse and reside in different country towns. As to rivalry in trade and manufactures, whether it was severely felt or not, it was a constant matter of complaint. In the reign of James the First the London weavers protested that "Aliens injure trade—employ men younger than allowed by Statute—live more cheaply—and therefore sell more cheaply and engross the trade of foreigners." It was alleged that they neglected the law restricting the number of foreigners whom they might take into their service, and that by reason of their numbers they raised the price of food and house-rents. These were charges which, in one form or another, have been made times without number from that day to the present. It was, however, in regard to naturalisation that the suspicion of foreigners was most conspicuously shown. In the reign of James the First, for instance, not only was a duty on aliens imposed, but a sacramental test was made a preliminary condition of naturalisation, the effect being to exclude Jews and Roman Catholics from the privilege; and though somewhat later exceptions were made in favour of persons engaged in working hemp and flax or who had been resident for seven years in the American plantations, the test in the case of the Roman Catholics was rigorously maintained. Special legislation provided for the naturalisation of the Huguenots, but it was not until 1709 that a general Act for naturalising foreign Protestants was passed, only to be repealed in 1712. The experiment does not appear to have been repeated until 1844, when the existing Naturalisation Act was passed. The arguments which were made use

of in the discussions over the Naturalisation Bills are exceedingly instructive as illustrations of the prevailing sentiments of the time. It was urged that the presence of the alien would be dangerous in time of war, and would be made an excuse for a standing army; that professed enemies of the Church would destroy it and endanger the national religion; that aliens would vote at elections, enter Parliament and govern the country; that by intermarriage they would blot out the English race; that they would become serious rivals with the natives in trade; that, if successful, they would return and take their money with them; that, if not, they would as paupers become a burden on the country; that by means of their connections abroad they would monopolise foreign trade, and promote the import of foreign manufactures; and lastly that they would defeat the purposes of the Navigation Act. It was in a Parliamentary debate on the subject in 1709 that Sir John Knight, a red-hot Tory and member for Bristol, made an extraordinary speech. The Naturalisation Bill would, he said, bring "as great afflictions on this nation as ever fell upon the Egyptians, and one of their plagues we have at this time very severe upon us. I mean that of their land bringing forth frogs in abundance, even in the chambers of their kings, for there is no entering the Courts of St. James's and Whitehall, the palaces of our hereditary kings, for the great noise and croaking of the frog-landers." He concluded by moving "that the Sergeant be commanded to open the doors, and let us kick the Bill out of the House, and the foreigners out of the Kingdom." The speech was printed and dispersed throughout the country in order to inflame popular opinion against the Bill, and its author became a kind

of hero. In the House of Commons, however, it was very differently regarded, and he was called on to recant it. Fearing expulsion he complied, and the speech was ordered by the House to be burned by the common hangman.

Of the unpopularity of foreigners upon mere grounds of sentiment and prejudice there is no lack of curious testimony. It was long believed, for instance, that the great fire of London was their handiwork. In the reign of William the Third the jealousy of the Dutch became so great that demands were made in Parliament for the substitution of English for Dutch generals, for the dismissal of William's Dutch guards, for a standing army consisting of native-born English subjects only, it being averred that "strangers are the nest-eggs of foreign invasion." William's grants of lands, pensions, and titles to his foreign favourites aroused the bitterest opposition. The general feeling was expressed by a speaker in the House of Commons who declared that foreigners "had not the bowels of Englishmen, but would be contented to see his country destroyed, when they are not to get their wills of it." The King was requested not to admit foreigners to his Privy Council, and a provision to this effect was afterwards inserted in the Act of Settlement. It was to soften this animosity that Defoe wrote *THE TRUE-BORN ENGLISHMAN*, a satire in which he ridiculed those who boasted of their English purity of blood.

A True-born Englishman's a contradiction!

In speech, an irony! in fact, a fiction!

A banter made to be a test of fools!

Which those who use it justly ridicules.

A metaphor invented to express

A man akin to all the universe!

The foreigners moreover, in spite

of the clause in *Magna Charta* which secured them as traders from violence and pecuniary exactions, were subjected to petty annoyances and even persecution. The Roman Catholics were the greatest sufferers, as might have been expected. In the seventeenth century, for instance, a number of tapestry-makers and gilders, who had been encouraged to come over on the faith of receiving protection from the State, were either imprisoned for refusing to take the oath of supremacy, or ordered to leave the country. Sometimes the Trade Guilds or Unions (then, as now, tyrannical bodies) retaliated on foreigners by subjecting them to fines upon the ground that they had not fully complied with the rules and regulations; and when Bills were introduced into Parliament to enable foreigners to reside and carry on their work in certain specified localities, they were vigorously opposed. In the year 1668 a curious case occurred; several Frenchmen were committed to the Tower for having attempted to "debauch" some English workmen, or, in other words, to persuade them to divulge the mystery, or craft, of weaving silk stockings.

The extent to which alien immigrants have influenced the course of English history has perhaps never yet been fully realised. In almost every great crisis they played a part. In the first place it may be said that they helped to promote the Reformation, which in England was substantially a protest against foreign interference, and an expression of the desire to worship, as a French critic has well said, "an English God." The provision enacted in the sixteenth century that foreign colonists should build and maintain a Protestant church in the places where they were allowed to settle, helped to root the Protestant faith firmly in the land. Next, they

threw almost the whole weight of their influence and power into the parliamentary scale during the great Civil War; and it is a remarkable fact that whereas the west and north-west of England was chiefly Cavalier, the east and south-east, where the foreign refugees were mainly centred, were the stronghold of the Roundheads. At the next great national crisis in 1688 the resident aliens almost to a man welcomed the Prince of Orange and the Dutch. In party politics the foreign element was usually a considerable factor. Speaking generally, it may be said that the alien immigrants became naturally Whigs: first, because flying from religious persecution, they above all things desired religious freedom; and secondly, because, being severed from the land, they helped to swell the trading classes, which in England stood opposed to the Tory landed interest. During the reign of the Stuarts, when the sympathy of the Court for France was generally suspected, the Whig cause was aided by the anti-French feeling of the people; though after the Revolution of 1688, when William the Third disgusted the nation by loading his Dutch favourites with rewards, the dislike of foreigners became, for a time, advantageous to the Tories. At Parliamentary elections, especially in London, Westminster, and Southwark, the influence of the aliens, and their votes, when they had them, were usually cast in favour of the Whigs; which is no doubt the reason why the Tory Harley, Earl of Oxford, opposed naturalisation on the ground, as he said, that he did not wish to see the country overrun with "schismatics and beggars." It was the Whigs who, greatly to their honour, passed the first Naturalisation Act, in the face of much popular opposition. The great immigration of

refugees from the Palatinate in 1709 was another incident that gave rise to a display of party feeling. Invited over by the Government, with the sympathy of the Court, they formed a camp at Blackheath, and large subscriptions, about £15,000 in all, were raised chiefly by the City merchants for their relief. Much indignation was aroused. A vote was passed in the House of Commons that the bringing over the Palatinates was an oppression of the people and a waste of public money, and that those who advised it were enemies of the nation. Even Swift in *THE EXAMINER* asserted that the refugees bred contagion and caused undue competition. As a matter of fact, they were speedily sent away, some to Ireland, and some to the American plantations; but not before charity itself had been made an instrument of faction. For, as Bishop Burnet relates, "all the Tories declared against the good reception that was given them, as much as the Whigs approved it."

The history of the Jewish alien immigrant is of special interest in relation to the present exodus from Eastern Europe; for it is from this source that the foreign indraught into England mainly flows. That the Jews were totally banished in the reign of Edward the First is a well-established fact; and though doubtless some of them crept back from time to time, they received no encouragement to settle until the time of Cromwell who exerted himself for their protection. It is an extraordinary fact that so widely did the report of this protection spread that some Asiatic Jews, so it was alleged, believed him to be the Messiah, and caused an inquiry to be made in Huntingdonshire. In the reign of James the Second the Jewish immigrant was relieved from the pay-

ment of alien duty, which, however, was re-imposed after the Revolution on the petition of the London merchants. In the reign of William the Third it was proposed in Parliament to raise a special tax of £100,000 upon the Jews, against which they not unnaturally petitioned. And though there was in the eighteenth century some legislation in their favour, it is evident that as a class they were decidedly unpopular. For instance, in 1753 an address was presented by the Reading Corporation to their parliamentary representatives in which there was urged a more drastic treatment of this unhappy race. "To enumerate," so the address ran, "all the massacres and persecutions of the Jews upon the score of religion, the many extortions and cruelties arising from their usury, and the treasons and conspiracies from their covetousness, would be an endless task, and in great measure a repetition of what has been already published." It is recorded that the parliamentary representatives, no doubt anxious for their seats, gave a favourable answer.

That the alien immigrant, therefore, has been an important factor in English history is clear; and that he has also been in some ways a valuable element in the population there is just as little doubt. To the weaving industry, and its indebtedness to the Flemish and Walloons, it is hardly necessary to refer. It is noteworthy, however, that Lord Clarendon states in his History that from this source "the benefit to the kingdom by such an access of trade and improvement of manufactures was very considerable;" and, though a strong Churchman, he lamented the treatment of the refugees at the hands of some of the bishops, especially Dr. Wren of Norwich. In consequence many of this industrious population were driven to leave the country, thus lessening the

manufacture of cloths, and taking away with them the mystery of their craft. The connection of the Huguenots with the silk-spinning industry is equally well-known. Workers in tapestry, gilding, and sail-cloth (the latter a manufacture of prime importance for a maritime nation) were specially invited over from abroad. Sometimes they did not await an invitation; at least it is recorded that in 1673 a Dutch master-weaver arrived with thirty workmen and offered to introduce the manufacture of the finest cloth in Europe, though it does not appear whether the offer was accepted. A striking instance of foreign immigrants bringing prosperity to a place is that of Rye. It is said that its trade was materially increased by the foreign mariners who brought their ships with them and made the town their home. That many of the aliens were good sailors is evident from the fact that it was more than once proposed to modify the Navigation Act, so as to enable them to be employed on British ships.

It remains to be considered whether the historical facts which have been very briefly noticed have any bearing on the question of alien immigration in its present form and extent, which of late years has roused so much attention. That the past is not without its lessons seems apparent.

It is evident in the first place that the allegations of over-crowding, contagion, and competition should be received with a good deal of caution, because a native population is naturally very prone to make them. Much more will this caution be increased when it is remembered that the same complaints have been made many times before upon very slight foundation. Statements of this kind one is apt to disregard as being neither new nor true. And in fact it has been proved before the Royal Com-



mission appointed to report on the subject that the percentage of aliens in Great Britain is comparatively small.

When, moreover, it is considered how valuable the foreign elements have been in increasing the national wealth by their industry and by their introduction of new trades, it seems impossible to doubt that it would be an impolitic act to put any very stringent restrictions upon immigration in the future. In one particular, indeed, aliens have not now the same value as they were once generally thought to possess; namely, as mercenary soldiers. For it is a curious fact,—and there is hardly any more striking illustration of the change that has occurred in patriotic sentiment—that foreigners were formerly considered to be the most desirable recruits for military service. It was believed that the native-born population were better employed in civic life and reproductive industry. Sir William Petty, for example, ascribed the prosperity of the Dutch very largely to the fact that they hired their soldiers in England, Scotland, and Germany, “to venture their lives for sixpence a day,” to use his own contemptuous expression, and that the population of the country was increased by the children of the mercenaries, a result which other nations could not succeed in attaining even by means of naturalisation laws. If it be true that subjects are the glory of a king, and its people the riches of a nation, who can doubt that in the long run the exclusion of foreigners would produce economic loss?

But it will perhaps be said that considerations such as these, though they may be generally true, have little application to the existing state of things, when a horde of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe is

invading the country, and in London is driving out the native population. But if the fact be admitted, there are some qualifying circumstances to be remembered. There is, in the first place, some probability that refugees from persecution will be persons possessing qualities useful to society; for, as a rule, those who fly from oppression have more force of character than those who are content to submit. And certainly it cannot be denied that the Jews, as a general rule, make excellent citizens. Lord Beaconsfield (a somewhat partial witness perhaps) said that they were “a living and the most striking evidence of the falsity of that pernicious doctrine of modern times, the natural equality of man,” that all their tendencies were conservative, and lay in the direction of religion, property, and natural aristocracy. Whether this be exactly true or not, there is no reason for regarding a large Jewish element with alarm. Secondly there is ground for thinking that the alien immigrants, though doubtless they have in certain trades entered into vigorous competition with the natives, have, on the other hand, been of some advantage. “The development,” to quote from the Report of the Royal Commission, “of the three main industries,—tailoring, cabinet-making, and shoe-making—in which the aliens engage, has undoubtedly been beneficial in various ways; it has increased the demand for, and the manufacture of, not only goods made in this country (which were formerly imported from abroad), but the materials used in them, thus indirectly giving employment to native workers.” If this statement be correct, it is clear that there is much to set off by way of compensation against the evils whose existence can be proved to arise from immigration.

It cannot be too strongly borne in

mind that hatred of foreigners is a mark of primitive society, and that to give the rein to that sentiment is in reality an act of retrogression. In one of the great speeches which Thucydides has put in the mouth of Pericles, he reminds his hearers that it was one of the glories of which they might be proud that they had opened the gates of hospitality to the foreigner, and were in this way superior to the Spartans. The Romans also were liberal of naturalisation, and, therefore, as Bacon would say, fit for empire. National growth and consolidation are doubtless inevitable steps in the gradual evolution of humanity; and patriotism that grows with national growth is surely one of the purest and brightest of the virtues. But here it is not all unmixed good. Nations are, to use Mr. Balfour's phrase, not fluid but viscous; they are maintained only by the accumu-

lative effect of causes which in their sum total make up economic friction; they are, so to speak, clots formed in the circulation of mankind. The most striking instance of the operative force of patriotic feeling is the desire for the formation of exclusive and self-sufficing States, for putting barriers in the way of foreign imports, for building tariff walls, and imposing retaliatory duties. Of this desire the widely growing tendency to place restrictions on alien immigration is but another symptom. So far indeed as it can be proved that foreign residents abuse the privileges of their position,—as in some cases they unquestionably do—by committing acts of crime, or that they are harmful to the health or morals of the people, provision may be justly made for their repatriation or exclusion. But beyond this limit legislation should not travel.

C. B. ROYLANCE KENT.

## MANSE AND MINISTER.

AFTER travelling for several dull hours through a somewhat featureless country a northward bound express continues its journey with flying visits to the sea and lightning retreats, until, close on the border line, where Tweed runs to the ocean, the whole glittering expanse of blue bursts suddenly upon the eye. By that time a traveller is in the mood to recall a classic of his school-days and appreciate Xenophon's narrative of the Greek retreat out of the endless dominions of the Great King, when after months of toilsome wandering the far flash of the *Ægean* signalled home and the end of an historic march. He, too, like the sturdy Greeks, finds himself murmuring under his breath "The Sea, the Sea!" and already its sting is in his blood and its spray salt upon his lips. For the rest of the journey it is for ever dancing in his eyes, until the heat of summer day dies into the cool of a summer night. Far behind him now, lie the yellow fields of the South country, behind him also the grey waters of the Forth and the swift eddies of the Tay, and as dusk turns to dark the great wall of the *Grampians* piles itself upon his view and throws its mighty shadow upon the fertile valley of *Strathmore*. From the far west of the mountain line where the peaks are lost in mist and distance, the eye travels eastward to where the hills fall gently towards the coast; and in this happy region where the scarred and silent hill-sides grow less harsh in aspect and suffer the work of man's hand to appear upon them, and where the everlasting

mountains do obeisance to the sea, the traveller has reached his journey's end.

Such a traveller with this place for the end of my journeyings I have been more often than I can make the reckoning. It was my custom to go there when each winter session in the old University town of *St. Andrews* had come to an end, while the last winds of *March* still boomed through the vacant corridors of the old college and the white winter seas still fretted among the rocks. Later, when I had become all but a stranger in the grey streets splashed here and there with the scarlet gown, and exchanged the links and lusty sea-winds of the northern town for the sleepy and listless *Isis*, I used to return in the early days of the vacation to seek refreshment and pleasure in those quiet places of the earth to which the wisdom and the business of this world are unknown. And now in the burdens and heats to which every man who works is called, when on review even the most serious of his college days are like the reading of a light play, his mind in its leisure will go wandering for rest among places where his steps once loved to be. For this reason I find myself jotting down a few impressions which long intercourse with a place has fixed on my memory.

Those who are acquainted with a minister's manse in any parish in Scotland will not see in the few rough outlines of this particular one a sketch which comes freshly to the eye. Those again to whom a manse is only a name, who perhaps have

passed its gates but have never crossed its threshold and been counted among its household, may wonder what its special influence has been on a people whose ministers have in their time sat down in the seats of kings and priests. 'Tis a proud enquiry, if one had the knowledge and a heart stout enough to conduct it to a close. But the manse of which I write, as it stands to-day on the slopes of those peaceful hills which have forsaken the dark and gloomy mountains behind them and made an everlasting covenant with the low country, tempts me to no such enquiry. It has no historic associations. It has no archives in which are buried the secret history of the Covenant. It stands close to the kirk, but the quiet dead that sleep in the kirkyard never disturbed the world in their life and never aroused its curiosity after their death. It has no great antiquity like the houses of the neighbouring lairds. A square building, with walls white-washed if they were not covered with creepers and roses, standing far up the sloch of the burn, it is the first object to arrest the eye when a sharp turn of the road brings you into the last village that stands between the lowlands and the hills. It might well be called the house of peace, for no sounds ever reach it but the rumbling of the burn and the hum of the mill and the ringing of the Sabbath bells. But in my own mind I have always thought of the minister's house on the hill as the habitation of hope. Its situation and surroundings are of a kind to turn even a lazy and unimaginative mind to allegory. And when one enters its little green gate twice or thrice a year to stay for a while and depart again, like a ship that takes to the seas once more after port, the allegory of hope fixes itself fast upon all its memories. Even the occasional

traveller who has no personal acquaintance with the minister's house, and who seldom permits himself the luxury of idle moralising, who merely marks it above him from the dusty road and rests his eye on its white walls and green shades with an infinite sense of refreshment,—even he will fall into a reverie as he passes it by and observes how happily, and yet withal how unconsciously, the hand of man has planted it like a watch-tower on the marches of two kingdoms. For it stands on the confines of two separate worlds. It looks back upon the frowning brows of the great hills, upon the desolation of a wilderness and a region where the sun never visits the eternal shadows. It looks forward on a country that is as fair and fertile as God's own garden, upon the great southern strath shining with yellow fields, and with here the glitter of stream and there the gleam of a church spire. It may happen that the morning breaks dull and wet, and a drenching mist spreads its depression over the face of the whole land, till the long dreary hours of the day are past and night begins to settle down. Often I have watched the closing scene, as with a witch's wand, transform one's jaded and listless spirits into an enthusiasm that sends the blood marching through the veins with wild pulsations of indefinable joy and hope. Suddenly the rain ceases. The manse windows redden in the benedictory rays of the setting sun, which looks out once ere its departure. Away in the back world it is still cheerless and cold. The grey mists still roll low down on the hill-sides, and over their brows is spread an angry red flush. Cold and terrible in their displeasure,—one turns from them with a shudder and looks for comfort in the south. And like the land of promise it lies

under the eye, field and farmhouse, wood and pool, distant village and township,—the sweet and peaceful lowlands, glimmering in the soft light of departing day and glistening, like a jewel, after rain. In the manse garden the rose-bushes are heavy with moisture, the trees still drip, and through the open windows steals the delicious fragrance that is breathed from the wet woods when the rain is over and night at hand. In the dusk the lights in the valley below flicker into existence one by one, the tinkle of rustic music from the farmstead comes faintly to the ear; and the house on the hill looking across the twinkling landscape in the hush of evening stands there like a watchman in the night, a quiet and impressive monument of the hope that after the storm there shall be a great calm.

The manse has no rival in the respect of the villagers. The village itself has not much to boast of in solid masonry of any kind, except perhaps an ugly and garish building of red brick which has been dignified with the title of town-hall, and two public-houses that stick out a braggart sign over their doors and proclaim themselves hotels. The post-office does not even suggest that the fine arts have any existence, and it is difficult to realise that it has any official connection with the proud concerns of Government. It faces the street upon which its two windows look. One of them is filled with the stock of a general drapery; the other is reserved for the post-office and general groceries, and the haughty placards and notices of Government are condemned to an evil association with sweetmeat jars, rolls of black tobacco, and sides of pungent-smelling salt fish. These are all the public buildings, and of private houses in the village none can

compare with the manse,—not even the school-house with its tempting orchard and garden of gooseberry bushes. Some little way off there is another manse, the property of another denomination; and about a mile distant is the rectory of an Episcopal clergyman who is maintained for the spiritual needs of an Episcopal laird. But the other manse is never honoured with the exclusive prefix which separates *the* manse from the common herd. As for the rectory it is known by no other title in the village street than the *red house*, this brief description being accompanied with a jerk of the thumb in the direction of the castle of which the Episcopal residence is supposed to be as necessary an appurtenance as the laird's stables. The laird's houses are great indeed like the lairds themselves. But the laird of the land stands no longer in the old relation to his tenants, many of whom have never looked upon his face. During the winter the great house is empty of its lord, and the only representatives left behind him are his keepers and servants. Not till the heather is dry and burning on the hillsides under the scorching heats of August does he make a belated visit to the moors. Himself and his great house are not counted among the possessions of the country-side. They have ceased long since to be part and parcel of it. Their manners have suffered the deeply printed characters of the old Scotch gentry to be all but effaced, and what remains is as barely legible as the crumbling arms above their gateways. The house whose boast it was to have sheltered Scotland's heir is as empty almost as the body from which the spirit is sped. It has lost its grasp upon the land and has journeyed from the world of reality to an apotheosis in romance. But the manse is the sure



possession of the country-side. Like the sacred fire that burned for ever upon the hearth of the Roman temple, and went not out day nor night, if the fabric of a mighty State was to withstand the shocks of time and fate, the continuity of the history and traditions of Scotland is kept alive on the hearth of the Scotch manse. It is this stubborn fancy that takes hold of me whenever I look upon the minister's house on the hill, or pass through its green gate and enter its open door.

The master of the house on the hill is the minister of the parish. I describe him as if he were still master there, though his accounts, with the labours of twenty-seven years registered therein, are finally closed, and another fills his office. For the life of one man is a brief episode in the history of the manse which in a measure partakes of the qualities of the great hills behind it, those steadfast and silent sentinels over leagues of sheltered land. Their impassive and inscrutable faces look down on the revolutions of time in the valley beneath, motionless spectators of the race in which the torch of life is passed from hand to hand. And the manse on the hill, though in reckoning years its days are as grass compared with theirs, has yet watched long enough to judge if Lucretius had a true understanding of human mortality:

Inque brevi spatio mutantur sæcla  
animantum,  
Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.

The minister of the parish ended his days in the house on the hill. I use the obituary tense but this once, because manse and minister, as I knew them, are linked in an inseparable association. I remember him saying that he sometimes wished he could

escape from the silence of his country retreat into the cheerful clatter of the busy world, but that when he came into his garden before the dew was dry and saw the sun shining on every blade that grew he had not the heart to leave it; and I have grace enough to leave him still among his books and flowers.

He is not the kind of man whose lineaments have been stamped upon the pages of fiction. Pretences to godliness are studied neither in his features nor his dress; nor is he a man whom you would judge to have sat patiently at Calvin's feet or to have been cast in the iron mould of an inflexible theology. For a minister of the Kirk he is too much given up, some will tell you, to pagan idols. He swears as readily by Plato as by Paul, and of the ten divisions of the immortal Republic he would not, if put to it, sacrifice a single unit for a whole library of patristic literature. It is strange that his honest parishioners, who have never tasted of those banquets of old-world wisdom except the crumbs that come from their minister's table, mark no disloyalty to Christ's Kirk in his scholarly pedantries. Instead they make a marvel of him, and are mightily proud to have in their midst a man so deeply informed in the philosophies of the world.

A gentleman who happened to come into these parts once inquired of a farm servant if his minister was a good preacher. "Weel, sir," quoth the discerning rustic, "I wudna say that he is great at the preachin', but, dodman, he's a gran' scholar at ony rate." Thus it happens that it is not in the spirit of mere tolerance but of admiring wonderment that his little congregation watch him mount into the pulpit on a Sabbath morning and turn over the pages of the great bible. The doors of the little church stand

wide open, and through them pass inside a ripple of cool outer air and the murmur of the burn, while out of doors and far down the dusty road is carried the echo of an old psalm tune that in sterner times used to hearten men to sharpen their swords in the quarrels of the Kirk.

At last the droning of the old tune dies away and the minister makes ready to preach. So far the service has been flavoured with the strong wine of the days of the Covenant, and a stranger in the pews sits down in expectation of a long discourse divided into an interminable array of heads and sub-heads. If so, he is disappointed pleasantly, or grievously, according to his own measure of a sermon. The minister chooses his text and gravely submits it to the ears of his congregation. Then without a note or paper of any kind he begins to speak, wandering the while from side to side of the pulpit. He is a master of the art of allusion, which carries his thoughts from field to field, now into the old beaten paths of recorded wisdom and now upon fresh tracks over which his hearers have never set foot. Long before he has finished, the Hebrew maxim with which he set out is sparkling with the choicest aphorisms of ancient learning and embroidered with the jewellery of the poets. No doubt he falls into occasional extravagances, as when his enthusiasm is heated with a chase after the unfathomable understanding of the old Greek philosopher. But in a long-suffering experience of pulpit discourse, the wisdom of the elder Academy comes with surprising sweetness to one's ear as a variation from the usual bushel of proverbs gathered from Solomon.

Out of the pulpit the minister is no pedant. If there his inclination leads him to be always feeling the pulse of the few great and solitary minds that

have shed their light across centuries of time, the last trace of it is gone when he comes down from the seat of authority. The biographers of Charles the Fifth have recorded that he owed a great measure of his popularity to the extraordinary versatility of his accomplishments. He could be as stately as a Spanish Don, as coarse as a Flemish bumpkin, or as polished as an Italian wit, according to the quarter of his dominions from which the wind blew. To compare the minister of a country parish with the Emperor is at the least (to quote Herodotus's apology) to liken things that are small to things that are great, or to compare the peat-coloured burn that purls within earshot of the manse to the great white river which floats the ships from the seas into the heart of the land. But the minister's accomplishments, though more modest, are every whit as various. He can quote psalms with the shepherd when he has returned to his hut in the twilight and stuck the lamp in his window after a day's tramp among the hills; or he can hold his own with the doctor in an armchair debate upon the merits of Natural Selection. It is even said he can lift his glass with a neighbouring laird. Indeed, he is regarded with some disfavour by his brethren in the Presbytery, who stickle for the ancient discipline of the Kirk and are inclined to rate the trifling elegancies of scholarship and the qualities of good fellowship as among the veriest vanities of life. For this reason they look upon him as something of an Ishmaelite, or at best as in much the same case as was Augustine before his conversion, while he still paid sedulous court to the liberal arts. But the Roman scholar and saint is out of their reading and the opportunity for the rebuke has gone by. Once only they achieved a complete

triumph over him on one of the many occasions on which he used to confess in an outspoken fashion to a very indifferent regard for the Jews. "The Jews," he let fall in one unhappy expostulation, "the Jews are no more God's people than I am"; and the Presbytery shook their heads in solemn conclave and looked as if they took him at his word. But for the most part they have neither the skill nor the weapons to fence with him in open debate, and so they leave him unmolested in his lonely habitation on the edge of the wilderness.

The minister's personal appearance is in keeping with the robust structure of his mind. He is no parody of manhood, more spectral than human, like him who

Read but one book, and ever reading  
grew  
So grated down and filed away with  
thought,  
So lean his eyes were monstrous, while  
the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs, and  
spine.

Every detail of such a portrait his straight figure belies. In his green days he was suckled as much on the sea-winds that swept the gray streets of St. Andrews as on the logic of Aristotle, and he imbibed the ozone as greedily as the Analytics. The memory of his exploits is a tradition in the University to this day. He won most of the prizes in Classics and afterwards in Divinity. But he has more heroic claims to fame among succeeding generations of students. He was the only man in his time who could dive from the Great Rock in any sea or season. He was also the author of some of the songs with which the benches still ring on the opening and closing days of the winter session. To look at him now in all his great strength and stature,

to mark him in his gay or sober moods as they change and rechange upon him, to hear him recount the student tales of thirty years ago, one would judge of him that out of the environment of those thirty years he has never had the heart to step. Counting by years he is far past the mid-time of life, but his spirit has lost none of the lightness of youth. It is a matter of special pleasure to him to be asked for a verdict on anything which calls for the exercise of a discreet and judicious taste,—a book, a vase, a picture, or any of the articles of furniture which belong to the *repertoire* of a man of letters. And on these occasions he will rally a youthful admirer of Tennyson's MAUD, and declare that such stuff as MAUD and THE SONG OF SOLOMON are fit food only for people who are distempered with the sickness of love. Perhaps in this, as in all else, he professes to follow his master Plato, who would have sternly denied a man all access to the mistress of his soul, until such time as he had made good the right by arms, and would have discountenanced every shade of sentiment that placed this harsh condition in jeopardy. But in this matter of sentiment the chances are the minister is not above a piece of hypocrisy. The evidence is an arbour in the manse garden which is inaccessible by the ordinary and most obvious routes. It is smothered in a thicket which has never been reclaimed by the gardener. It has but one open side (and even that partially overgrown with a network of creepers) which looks across the great strath below. The minister has christened this bewitching angle of his garden Courting Corner, a place lovely at all times to a susceptible temperament, and one which on a favourable night, when the valley beneath is filled here with the moving

shadows of the hills, and there with pools of moonlight, would turn the cloistered reveries of a monk into romantic musings. The minister himself has been wedded for many a year and is well on in grey hairs, and the original uses of this retreat have fallen into decay. Instead it has become a hermitage in which he prepares his sermons and writes his letters, or it may be, if the mood comes on him, translates a Scotch song into Greek verses. There are not many events in the life of an upland parish that call for the comment of an industrious pen. Still there are a few which the minister amuses his leisure with celebrating in verse. The place is famed for a yearly meeting of clansmen, and for a long summer day the village wears a holiday face. For once the mill-wheel is silent and idle, and the street rings with the mirth of rustic dances and echoes with the shrill scream of the pipes. Or if the village calendar will not furnish him a theme, he will find it beyond his own doors. It was across that same barrier of hills by the moss and drove roads of the uplands that Montrose led his army in a last desperate venture for King Charles, and although the Great Marquis was the sworn enemy of the Kirk, it is all one in the minister's appreciation now that for many a day the curtain has fallen on that historic drama and at least one actor played out his part to a heroic close.

Thus to detach an incident from the happenings of his own experience and commemorate it, or to take an old portrait out of its setting in history and refashion it according to his own will, these are the uncriticised and unpublished essays with which he fills up an idle hour.

The last of the minister's random adventures with the pen lies on my table now, a speechless memorial, if that were needful, that the hand from which it flowed is vanished. It is a Greek version of *THE LAND OF THE LEAL*; and as he translated the first lines of the old song perhaps he felt already that he had got his summons and was bidden to travel thither, going out upon such a journey as should make him for ever a stranger to the white house on the hill. He parted slowly with the scenes he loved as if disputing every turn in the valley of shadows. At length he preached what he knew to be his last sermon, and for the last time came down from his pulpit: "An evil disease cleaveth fast unto him, and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more." Such was the hushed whisper of the village street during the brief struggle in which a man's last fight is fought and lost. My mind still goes wandering towards that quiet upland parish. The water splashes as merrily as ever upon the mill-wheel, and the burn rambles without concern below the manse windows. The mists lift and settle upon the brows of the great mountains as before, and the house on the hill still keeps its vigil over the peaceful valley of the fair South Country. Except for one vacant place, little else is changed. Yet even in a great multitude each one has his appointed task which no other may do. And it is proof sufficient that the plan of a man's days are beyond calculation, if but one spark of life gone out will take the rose from the morning skies and lengthen the shadows of the night.

DANIEL JOHNSTON.

## THE IMPIETY OF YUEN YAN.

"Do not despair; even Yuen Yan once cast a missile at the Tablets," is a proverb of encouragement well worn throughout the Empire; but although it is daily on the lips of some it is doubtful if a single person could give an intelligent account of the Yuen Yan in question beyond repeating the outside facts that he was of a humane and consistent disposition and during the greater part of his life possessed every desirable attribute of wealth, family, and virtuous esteem. If more closely questioned with reference to the specific incident alluded to these persons would not hesitate to assert that the proverb was not to be understood in so superficial a sense, protesting, with much indignation, that Yuen Yan was of too courteous and lofty a nature to be guilty of so unseemly an action, and contemptuously enquiring what possible reason one who enjoyed every advantage in this world and every prospect of an unruffled felicity in the Beyond could have for behaving in so outrageous a manner. This explanation by no means satisfied this writer, and after much research he has brought to light the forgotten story of Yuen Yan's early life which may be thus related.

At the period with which this part of the narrative is concerned Yuen Yan dwelt with his mother in one of the least attractive of the arches beneath the city wall. As a youth it had been his intention to take an exceptionally high place in the public examinations, and, rising at once to a position of responsible authority, to mark himself out for continual pro-

motion by the exercise of unfailing discretion and indomitable zeal. Having saved his country in a moment of acute national danger he contemplated accepting a title of unique distinction and retiring to his native province, where he would build an adequate palace which he had already planned out down to the most trivial detail. There he purposed spending the remainder of his life, receiving frequent tokens of regard from the hand of the gratified Emperor, marrying an accomplished and refined wife who would doubtless be one of the princesses of the Imperial House, and conscientiously regarding the Virtues throughout. The transition from this sumptuously-contrived residence to a damp arch in the city wall, and from the high destiny indicated to the occupation of leading from place to place a company of sightless mendicants, had been neither instantaneous nor painless, but Yuen Yan had never for a moment wavered from the enlightened maxims which he had adopted as his guiding principles, nor did he suffer unending trials to lessen his reverence for the Virtues. "Having set out with the full intention of becoming a wealthy mandarin, it would have been a small achievement to have reached that position with unshattered ideals," he frequently remarked; "but having thus set out, it is a matter for more than ordinary congratulation to have fallen to the position of leading a string of blind beggars about the city and still to retain unimpaired the ingenuous beliefs and aspirations of youth."

"Doubtless," replied his aged



mother, whenever she chanced to overhear this honourable reflection, "doubtless the foolish calf who innocently puts his foot into the jelly finds a like consolation. This person, however, would gladly exchange the most illimitable moral satisfaction engendered by acute poverty for a few of the material comforts of a sordid competence, nor would she hesitate to throw into the balance all the aspirations and improving sayings to be found within the Classics."

"Esteemed mother," protested Yan, "more than three thousand years ago the royal philosopher Nin-hyo made the observation, 'Better an earth-lined cave from which the stars are visible than a golden pagoda roofed over with iniquity,' and the saying has stood the test of time."

"The remark would have carried a weightier conviction if the broad-minded sovereign had himself first stood the test of lying for a few years with enlarged joints and afflicted bones in the abode he so prudently recommended for others," replied his mother; and without giving Yuen Yan any opportunity of bringing forward further proof of their highly-favoured destiny she betook herself to her own straw at the furthest end of the arch.

Up to this period of his life Yuen Yan's innate reverence and courtesy of manner had enabled him to maintain an impassive attitude in the face of every discouragement, but now he was exposed to a fresh series of trials in addition to the unsympathetic attitude which his mother never failed to unroll before him. It has already been expressed that Yuen Yan's occupation and the manner by which he gained his livelihood consisted in leading a number of blind mendicants about the streets of the city and into the shops and dwelling-places of those who might reasonably be willing to

pay in order to be relieved of their presence. In this profession Yan's venerating and custom-regarding nature compelled him to act as leaders of blind beggars had acted throughout all historical times and far back into the dim recesses of legendary epochs, and this, in an era when the leisurely habits of the past were falling into disuse and when rivals and competitors were springing up on all sides, tended almost daily to decrease the proceeds of his labour and to sow an insidious doubt even in his unquestioning mind.

In particular, among those whom Yan regarded most objectionably was one named Ho. Although only recently arrived in the city from a country beyond the Bitter Water, Ho was already known in every quarter both to the merchants and stall-keepers, who trembled at his approaching shadow, and to the competing mendicants who now counted their cash with two fingers where they had before needed both hands. This distressingly active person made no secret of his methods and intention; for, upon his arrival, he plainly announced that his object was to make the foundations of benevolence vibrate like the strings of a many-toned lute, and he compared his general progress through the haunts of the charitably-disposed to the passage of a highly-charged firework through an assembly of meditative turtles. He was usually known, he added, as "the rapidly-moving person," or "the one devoid of outline," and it soon became apparent that he was also quite destitute of all dignified restraint. Selecting the place of commerce of some wealthy merchant, Ho entered without hesitation and thrusting aside the waiting customers he continued to strike the boards impatiently until he gained the attention of the chief merchant himself.



"Honourable salutations," he would say, "but do not entreat this illiterate person to enter the inner room, for he cannot tarry to discuss the movements of the planets or the sublime Emperor's health. Behold, for half a tael of silver you may purchase immunity from his discreditable persistence for seven days; here is the acknowledgement duly made out and attested. Let the payment be made in pieces of metal and not in paper obligations." Unless immediate compliance followed Ho at once began noisily to cast down the articles of commerce, to roll bodily upon the more fragile objects, to become demoniacally possessed on the floor, and to resort to a variety of expedients until all the customers were driven forth in panic.

In the case of an excessively stubborn merchant he had not hesitated to draw a formidable knife and to gash himself in a superficial but very imposing manner; then he had rushed out uttering cries of terror, and sinking down by the door had remained there for the greater part of the day, warning those who would have entered to be upon their guard against being enticed in and murdered, at the same time groaning aloud and displaying his own wounds. Even this seeming disregard of time was well-considered, for when the tidings spread about the city other merchants did not wait for Ho to enter and greet them, but standing at their doors money in hand they pressed it upon him the moment he appeared and besought him to remove his distinguished presence from their plague-infected street. To the ordinary mendicants of the city this stress of competition was disastrous, but to Yuen Yan it was overwhelming. Thoroughly imbued with the deferential systems of antiquity, he led his band from place to place with

a fitting regard for the requirements of ceremonial etiquette and a due observance of leisurely unconcern. Those to whom he addressed himself he approached with obsequious tact, and in the face of a refusal to contribute to his store his most violent expedient did not go beyond marshalling his company of suppliants in an orderly group upon the shop floor, where they sang in unison a composed chant extolling the fruits of munificence and setting forth the evil plight which would certainly attend the flinty-stomached in the Upper Air. In this way Yuen Yan had been content to devote several hours to a single shop in the hope of receiving finally a few pieces of brass money; but now his persecutions were so mild that the merchants and venders rather welcomed him by comparison with the intolerable Ho, and would on no account pay to be relieved of the infliction of his presence. "Have we not disbursed in one day to the piratical Ho thrice the sum which we had set by to serve its purpose for a hand-count of moons, and do we possess the Great Secret?" they cried. "Nevertheless, dispose your engaging band of mendicants about the place freely until it suits your refined convenience to proceed elsewhere, oh meritorious Yuen Yan, for your unassuming qualities have won our consistent regard; but an insatiable sponge has already been laid upon the well-spring of our benevolence and the tenacity of our closed hand is inflexible." Even the passive mendicants began to murmur against his leadership, urging him that he should adopt at least some of the simpler methods of the gifted Ho and thereby save them all from an otherwise inevitable starvation. The Emperor Kia-tsing, said the one who led their voices (referring in his malignant bitterness to a sovereign of the

previous dynasty) was dead, although the fact had doubtless escaped Yuen Yan's deliberate perception. The methods of four thousand years ago were becoming obsolete in the face of a strenuous competition, and unless Yuen Yan was disposed to assume a more highly-oiled appearance they must certainly address themselves to another leader.

It was on this occasion that the incident took place which has passed down in the form of an inspiring proverb. Yuen Yan had conscientiously delivered at the door of his abode the last of his company and was turning his footsteps towards his own arch, when he encountered the contumelious Ho who was likewise returning at the close of a day's mendicancy,—but with this distinction; that, whereas Ho was followed by two stalwart attendants carrying between them a sack full of money, Yan's share of his band's enterprise consisted solely of one base coin of a kind which the charitable set aside for bestowing upon the blind, and quite useless for all ordinary purposes of exchange. A few paces further on Yan reached the Temple of the Unseen Forces and paused for a moment, as his custom was, to cast his eyes up to the tablets engraved with the Virtues, before which some devout person nightly hung a lantern. Goaded by a sudden impulse Yan looked each way about the deserted street, and perceiving that he was alone he deliberately extended his out-thrust tongue towards the inspired precepts. Then taking from an inner sleeve the base coin he flung it at the inscribed characters and observed with satisfaction that it struck the verse beginning, "The Rewards of a Quiescent and Mentally-introspective Life are Unbounded—"

When Yan entered his arch some hours later his mother could not fail

to observe that a subtle change had come over his manner of behaving. Much of the leisurely dignity had melted out of his footsteps, and he wore his hat and outer garments at an angle which plainly testified that he was a person who might be supposed to have a marked objection to returning home before the early hours of the morning. Furthermore, as he entered he was chanting certain melodious words by which he endeavoured to convey the misleading impression that his chief amusement consisted in defying the official watchers of the town, and he continually reiterated a claim to be regarded as "one of the beardless goats." Thus expressing himself Yan sank down in his appointed corner, and would doubtlessly soon have been floating peacefully in the Middle Distance had not the door been again thrown open and a stranger named Chou-hu entered.

"Prosperity!" said Chou-hu courteously, addressing himself to Yan's mother. "Have you eaten your rice? Behold, I come to lay before you a very attractive proposal regarding your son."

"The flower attracts the bee, but when he departs it is to his lips that the honey clings," replied the woman cautiously; for, after Yan's boastful words on entering, she had a fear lest haply this person might be one on behalf of some guardians of the night whom her son had flung across the street (as he had specifically declared his habitual treatment of them to be) come to take him by stratagem.

"Does the pacific lamb become a wolf by night?" said Chou-hu, displaying himself reassuringly. "Wrap your ears well round my words, for they may prove very remunerative. It cannot be a matter outside your knowledge that the profession of con-

ducting an assembly of blind mendicants from place to place no longer yields the wage of even a frugal existence in this city. In the future, for all the sympathy that he will arouse, Yan might as well go begging with a silver bowl. In consequence of his speechless condition he will be unable to support either you or himself by any other form of labour, and your line will thereupon become extinct and your standing in the Upper Air be rendered intolerable."

"It is a remote contingency, but, as the proverb says, 'The wise hen is never too old to dread the Spring,'" replied Yan's mother with commendable prudence. "By what means, then, may this calamity be averted?"

"The person before you," continued Chou-hu, "is a barber and embellisher of pig-tails from the street leading to the Three-horned Pagoda of Eggs. He has long observed the restraint and moderation of Yan's demeanour and now being in need of one to assist him his earliest thought turns to him. The affliction which would be an insuperable barrier in all ordinary cases may here be used to advantage, for being unable to converse with those seated before him or to hear their salutations Yan will be absolved from the necessity of engaging in diffuse and refined conversation, and in consequence he will submit at least twice the number of persons to his dexterous energies. In this way he will secure a higher reward than this person could otherwise afford, and many additional comforts will doubtless fall into the sleeve of his engaging mother."

At this point the woman began to understand that the sense in which Chou-hu had referred to Yan's speechless condition was not that which she had at the time deemed it to be. It may here be made clear that it was Yuen Yan's custom to wear suspended

about his neck an inscribed board bearing the words "Speechless, and devoid of the faculty of hearing," but this originated out of his courteous and deferential nature (for to his self-obliterative mind it did not seem respectful that he should appear to be better endowed than those whom he led), nor could it be asserted that he wilfully deceived even the passing stranger, for he would freely enter into conversation with anyone whom he encountered. Nevertheless, an impression had thus been formed in Chou-hu's mind and the woman forbore to correct it, thinking that it would be scarcely polite to assert herself better informed on any subject than he was, especially as he had spoken of Yan thereby receiving a higher wage. Yan himself would doubtless have revealed something had he not been otherwise employed. Hearing the conversation turn towards his afflictions he at once began to search very industriously among the straw upon which he lay for the inscribed board in question; for to his somewhat confused imagination it seemed at the time that only by displaying it openly could he prove to Chou-hu that he was in no way deficient. As the board was found on the following morning nailed to the great outer door of the Hall of Public Justice (where it remained for many days owing to the official impression that so bold and undeniable a pronouncement must have received the direct authority of the sublime Emperor) Yan was not unnaturally engaged for a considerable time, and in the meanwhile his mother contrived to impress upon him by an unmistakable sign that he should reveal nothing but leave the matter in her hands.

Then said Yan's mother: "Truly the proposal is not altogether wanting in alluring colours, but in what man-

ner will Yan interpret the commands of those who place themselves before him, when he has attained sufficient proficiency to be entrusted with the knife and the shearing irons?"

"The objection is a superficial one," replied Chou-hu. "When a person seats himself upon the operating stool he either throws back his head, fixing his eyes upon the upper room with a set and resolute air, or inclines it slightly forward as in a reverent tranquillity. In the former case he requires his uneven surfaces to be made smooth; in the latter he is desirous that his pig-tail should be drawn out and trimmed. Do not doubt Yan's capability to conduct himself in a discreet and becoming manner, but communicate to him, by the usual means which you adopt, the offer thus laid out; and unless he should be incredibly obtuse or unfilial to a criminal degree he will present himself at the Sign of the Gilt Thunderbolt at an early hour to-morrow."

There is a prudent caution expressed in the proverb: "The hand that feeds the ox grasps the knife when it is fattened; crawl backwards from the presence of a munificent official." Chou-hu, in spite of his plausible pretext, would have experienced no difficulty in obtaining the services of one better equipped to assist him than was Yuen Yan, so that in order to discover his real object it becomes necessary to look underneath his words. He was indeed, as he had stated, a barber and an embellisher of pig-tails, and for many years he had grown rich and round-bodied on the reputation of being one of the most skilful within his quarter of the city. In an evil moment, however, he had abandoned the moderation of his past life, surrounded himself with an atmosphere of opium smoke, and existed

continually in the mind-dimming effects of rice-spirit. From this cause his custom began to languish: his hand no longer swept in the graceful and unhesitating curves which had once been the admiration of all beholders, but displayed on the contrary a very disconcerting irregularity of movement; and on the day of his visit he had shorn away the venerable moustaches of the baker Heng-cho under a mistaken impression as to the reality of things and a wavering vision of their exact position. Now the baker had been inordinately proud of his long white moustaches and valued them above all his possessions, so that, invoking the spirits of his ancestors to behold his degradation and to support him in his resolve, and calling in all the passers-by to bear witness to his oath, he had solemnly bound himself either to cut down Chou-hu fatally, or, should that prove too difficult an accomplishment, to commit suicide within his shop. This two-fold danger thoroughly stupefied Chou-hu and made him incapable of taking any action beyond consuming further and more unstinted potions of rice-spirit and rending article after article of his apparel, until his wife Ai-ang prudently dismissed such persons as loitered and barred the outer door.

"Open your eyes upon the facts by which you are surrounded, oh contemptible Chou-hu," she said, returning to his side and standing over him. "Already your degraded instincts have brought us within measurable distance of poverty, and if you neglect your business to avoid Heng-cho, actual want will soon beset us. If you remain openly within his sight you will certainly be removed forcibly to the Upper Air, leaving this inoffensive person destitute and abandoned, and, if by the exercise of unflinching vigilance you escape both

these dangers, you will be reserved to an even worse plight, for Heng-cho in desperation will inevitably carry out the latter part of his threat, dedicating his spirit to the duty of continually haunting you and frustrating your ambitions here on earth and calling to his assistance myriads of ancestors and relations to torment you in the Upper Air."

"How attractively, and in what brilliantly-coloured outlines do you present the various facts of existence!" exclaimed Chou-hu with inelegant resentment. "Do not neglect to add that, to-morrow being the occasion of the Moon Festival, the inexorable person who owns this residence will present himself to collect his dues, that, in consequence of the rebellion in the south, the sagacious Emperor has doubled the price of opium, that some irredeemable out-cast has carried away this person's blue silk umbrella, and then doubtless the alluring picture of internal felicity around the Ancestral Altar of the Gilt Thunderbolt will be complete."

"Light words are easily spoken behind barred doors," said his wife scornfully. "Let my lord, then, recline indolently upon the floor of his inner chamber while this person sumptuously lulls him into oblivion with the music of her voice, regardless of the morrow and of the fate in which his apathy involves us both."

"By no means," exclaimed Chou hu, rising hastily and tearing away much of his elaborately-arranged pig-tail in his uncontrollable rage; "there is yet a more pleasurable alternative than that and one which will ensure to this person a period of otherwise unattainable domestic calm and at the same time involve a detestable enemy in confusion. Anticipating the dull-witted Heng-cho *this* one will now proceed across the street and, committing suicide within *his* door, will

henceforth enjoy the honourable satisfaction of haunting *his* footsteps and rendering his bakehouse and ovens untenable." With this assurance Chou-hu seized one of his most formidable business weapons and caused it to revolve around his head with great rapidity, but at the same time with extreme carefulness.

"There is a ready saying, 'The new-born lamb does not fear a tiger, but before he becomes a sheep he will flee from a wolf,'" said Ai-ang, without in any way deeming it necessary to arrest Chou-hu's hand. "Full confidently will you set out, oh Chou-hu, but to reach the shop of Heng-cho it is necessary to pass the stall of the dealer in abandoned articles, and next to it are enticingly spread out the wares of Kong, the merchant in distilled spirits. Put aside your reliable scraping iron while you still have it, and this not ill-disposed person will lay before you a plan by which you may even yet avoid all inconveniences and at the same time regain your failing commerce."

"It is also said, 'The advice of a wise woman will ruin a walled city,'" replied Chou-hu, somewhat annoyed at his wife so opportunely comparing him to a sheep, but still more concerned to hear by what possible expedient she could successfully avert all the contending dangers of his position. "Nevertheless, proceed."

"In one of the least reputable quarters of the city there dwells a person called Yuen Yan," said the woman. "He is the leader of a band of sightless mendicants, and in this position he has frequently passed your open door, though,—doubtless being warned by the benevolent—he has never yet entered. Now this Yuen Yan, save for one or two unimportant details, is the reflected personification of your own exalted image, nor would those most intimate with your form



and outline be able to pronounce definitely unless you stood side by side before them. Furthermore he is by nature unable to hear any remark addressed to him, and is incapable of expressing himself in spoken words. Doubtless by these indications my lord's locust-like intelligence will already have leapt to an inspired understanding of the full project!"

"Assuredly," replied Chou-hu, caressing himself approvingly. "The essential details of the scheme are built about the ease with which this person could present himself at the abode of Yuen Yan in his absence and, gathering together that one's store of wealth unquestioned, retire with it to a distant and unknown spot and thereby elude the implacable Heng-cho's vengeance."

"Leaving your menial one in the walled city referred to, to share its fate, and, in particular, to undertake the distressing obligation of gathering up the atrocious Heng-cho after he has carried his final threat into effect! Truly must the crystal stream of your usually undimmed intelligence have become vapourised. Listen well. Disguising your external features slightly so that the resemblance may pass without remark, present yourself openly at the residence of the Yuen Yan in question—"

"First learning where it is situated!" interposed Chou-hu, with a desire to grasp the details competently.

"Unless a person of your retrospective taste would prefer to leave so trivial a point until afterwards," replied his wife in a tone of concentrated insincerity. "In either case, however, having arrived there, bargain with the one who has authority over Yuen Yan's movements, praising his demeanour and offering to receive him into the honours and profits of your craft. Doubtless the words of acquiescence will spring to meet your

own, for the various branches of mendicancy are languishing, and Yuen Yan can have no secret store of wealth. Do not hesitate to offer a higher wage than you would as an affair of ordinary commerce, for your safety depends upon it. Having secured Yan, teach him quickly the unpolished outlines of your business, and then clothing him in robes similar to your own let him take his stand within the shop and withdraw yourself to the inner chamber. None will suspect the artifice, and Yuen Yan is manifestly incapable of betraying it. Heng-cho, seeing him display himself openly, will not deem it necessary to commit suicide yet, and, should he cut down Yan fatally, the officials of the street will seize him and your own safety will be assured. Finally, if nothing particular happens at least your prosperity will be increased, for Yuen Yan will prove industrious, frugal, not addicted to excesses, and in every way reliable, and towards the shop of so exceptional a barber customers will turn in an unending stream."

"Alas," exclaimed Chou-hu, "when you boasted of an inspired scheme this person for a moment foolishly allowed his mind to contemplate the possibility of your having accidentally stumbled upon such an expedient, but your suggestion is only comparable with a company of ducks attempting to cross an ice-bound stream,—an excessive outlay of action but no beneficial progress. Should Yuen Yan freely present himself here on the morrow, pleading destitution and craving to be employed, this person will consider the petition with an open head, but it is beneath his dignity to wait upon so low-class an object." Affecting to recollect an arranged meeting of some importance Chou-hu then clad himself in other robes, altered the appearance of his



face, and set out to act in the manner already described, confident that the exact happening would never reach his lesser one's ears.

On the following day Yuen Yan presented himself at the door of the Gilt Thunderbolt, and quickly perfecting himself in the simpler methods of smoothing surfaces and adorning pig-tails, he took his stand within the shop and operated upon all who came to submit themselves to his embellishment. To those who addressed him with salutations he replied by a gesture tactfully bestowing an agreeable welcome yet at the same time conveying the impression that he was desirous of remaining undisturbed in the philosophical reflection upon which he was engaged. In spite of this it was impossible to lead his mind astray from any weighty detail, and those who, presuming upon his absorbed attitude, endeavoured to evade a just payment on any pretext whatever invariably found themselves firmly but courteously pressed to the wall by the neck, while a highly-polished smoothing blade was flashed to and fro before their eyes with an action of unmistakable significance. The number of customers increased almost daily, for Yan quickly proved himself to be expert above all comparison, while others came from every quarter of the city to test with their own eyes and ears the report that had reached them, to the effect that in the street leading to the Three-horned Pagoda of Eggs there dwelt a barber who made no pretence of elegant and refined conversation, and who did not even press upon those lying helpless in his power miraculous ointments and infallible charm-waters. Thus Chou-hu prospered greatly, but Yan still obeyed his mother's warning and raised a mask before his face, so that Chou-hu and his wife never doubted the reality of his infirmities.

From this cause they did not refrain from conversing together freely before him on subjects of the most poignant detail, whereby Yan learned much of their past lives and conduct while maintaining an attitude of impassive unconcern.

Upon a certain evening in the month when the grass-blades are transformed into silkworms, Yan was alone in the shop, improving the edge and reflecting brilliance of some of his implements, when he heard the woman exclaim from the inner room: "Truly the air from the desert is as hot and devoid of relief as the breath of the Great Dragon; let us repose for the time in the outer chamber." Whereupon they entered the shop and seating themselves upon a couch resumed their occupations, the barber fanning himself while he smoked, his wife gumming her hair and coiling it into the semblance of a bird with outstretched wings.

"The necessity for the elaborate caution of the past no longer exists," remarked Chou-hu presently. "The baker Heng-cho is desirous of becoming one of those who select the paving stones and regulate the number of hanging lanterns for the district lying around the Three-horned Pagoda. In this ambition he is opposed by Kong, the distilled spirit vender, who claims to be a more competent judge of paving stones and hanging lanterns, and one who will exercise a lynx-eyed vigilance upon the public outlay and especially devote himself to curbing the avarice of those bread-makers who habitually mix powdered white earth with their flour. Heng-cho is therefore very concerned that many should bear honourable testimony of his engaging qualities when the day of trial arrives, and thus positioned he has inscribed and sent to this person a written message offering a dignified

reconciliation and adding that he is convinced of the necessity of an enactment compelling all persons to wear a smooth face and a neatly-braided pig-tail."

"It is a creditable solution of the matter," said Ai-ang, speaking between the ivory pins which she held in her mouth. "Henceforth, then, you will take up your accustomed stand as in the past?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Chou-hu. "Yuen Yan is painstaking, and has perhaps done as well as could be expected of one of his shallow intellect, but the absence of suave and high-minded conversation cannot fail to be alienating the custom of the more polished. Plainly it is a short-sighted policy for a person to try to evade his destiny. Yan seems to have been born for the express purpose of leading blind beggars about the streets of the city, and to that profession he must return."

"Oh distressingly-superficial Chou-hu!" exclaimed his wife; "do men turn willingly from wine to partake of vinegar, or having been clothed in silk do they accept sackcloth without a struggle? Indeed, your eyes, which are large to regard your own deeds and comforts, grow small when they are turned towards the attainments of another. In no case will Yan return to his mendicants, for his band is by this time scattered and dispersed. His sleeve being now well lined and his hand proficient in every detail of his craft he will erect a stall, perchance even directly opposite or next to ourselves, and by subtlety, low charges, and diligence he will draw away the greater part of your custom."

"Alas," cried Chou-hu, turning an exceedingly inferior yellow, "there is a deeper wisdom in the proverb 'Do not seek to escape from a flood by clinging to a tiger's tail' than appears

at a casual glance. Now that this person is contemplating gathering again into his own hands the execution of his business, he cannot reasonably afford to employ another, yet it is an intolerable thought that Yan should make use of his experience to set up a sign opposed to the Gilt Thunderbolt. Obviously the only really safe course out of an unpleasant dilemma will be to slay Yan with as little delay as possible. After receiving continuous marks of our approval for so long it is certainly very inconsiderate of him to put us to so unpardonable an inconvenience."

"It is not an alluring alternative," confessed Ai-ang, crossing the room to where Yan was seated in order to survey her hair to greater advantage in a hanging mirror of three sides composed of burnished copper; "but there seems nothing else to be done in the difficult circumstances."

"The street is opportunely empty and there is little likelihood of anyone approaching at this hour," suggested Chou-hu. "What better scheme could be devised than that I should indicate to Yan by signs that I would honour him, and at the same time instruct him further in the correct pose of some of the recognised attitudes, by making smooth the surface of his face? Then during the operation I might perchance slip upon an over-ripe loquat lying unperceived upon the floor; my hand—"

"Ah-ah!" cried Ai-ang aloud, pressing her symmetrical fingers against her gracefully-proportioned ears; "do not, thou dragon-headed one, lead the conversation to such an extremity of detail, still less carry the resolution into effect before the very eyes of this delicately-susceptible person. Now to-morrow, after the mid-day meal, she will be journeying as far as the street of the venders of

woven fabrics in order to procure a piece of silk similar to the pearl-grey robe which she is wearing. The opportunity will be a favourable one, for to-morrow is the weekly occasion on which you raise the shutters and deny customers at an earlier hour; and it is really more modest that one of my impressionable refinement should be away from the house altogether and not merely in the inner chamber when that which is now here passes out."

"The suggestion is well-timed," replied Chou-hu. "No interruption will then be possible."

"Furthermore," continued his wife, sprinkling upon her hair a perfumed powder of gold which made it sparkle as it engaged the light at every point with a most entrancing lustre, "would it not be desirable to use a weapon less identified with your own hand? In the corner nearest to Yan there stands a massive and heavily-knotted club which could afterwards be burned. It would be an easy matter to call the simple Yan's attention to some object upon the floor and then as he bent down suffer him to pass Beyond."

"Assuredly," agreed Chou-hu, at once perceiving the wisdom of the change; "also, in that case, there would be less—"

"Ah—!" again cried the woman, shaking her upraised finger reprovingly at Chou-hu, for so daintily-endowed was her mind that she shrank from any of the grosser realities of the act unless they were clothed in very gilded flowers of speech. "Desist, oh crimson-minded barbarian! Let us now walk side by side along the river bank and drink in the soul-stirring melody of the musicians who at this hour will be making the spot doubly attractive with the concord of stringed woods and instruments of brass struck with harmonious unison."

The scheme for freeing Chou-hu from the embarrassment of Yan's position was really not badly arranged, nor would it have failed in most cases, but the barber was not sufficiently broad-witted to see that many of the inspired sayings which he used as arguments could be taken in another light and conveyed a decisive warning to himself. A pleasantly-devised proverb has been aptly compared to a precious jewel, and as the one has a hundred light-reflecting surfaces so has the other a diversity of applications until it is not infrequently beyond the comprehension of an ordinary person to know upon which side wisdom and prudence lie. On the following afternoon Yan was seated in his accustomed corner when Chou-hu entered the shop with uneven feet. The barriers against the street had been raised and the outer door was barred so that none might intrude, while Chou-hu had already carefully examined the walls to ensure that no crevices remained unsealed. As he entered he was seeking, somewhat incoherently, to justify himself by assuring the deities that he had almost changed his mind until he remembered many impious acts on Yan's part in the past, to avenge which he felt himself to be their duly appointed instrument. Furthermore, to convince them of the sacredness of his motive (and also to protect himself against the influence of evil spirits) he advanced repeating the words of an invocation which in his youth he had been accustomed to say daily in the temple, and thereupon Yan knew that the moment was at hand.

"Behold, master," he exclaimed suddenly, in clearly expressed words, "a tael lies at your feet."

Chou-hu looked down to the floor, and lying before him was a piece of

silver. To his dull and confused faculties it sounded an inaccurate detail of the pre-arranged plan that Yan should have addressed him and the remark itself seemed dimly to remind him of something that he had forgotten, but he was too involved with himself to be able to attach any logical significance to the facts and he at once stooped greedily to possess the coin. Then Yan, who had an unfaltering grasp upon the necessities of each passing second, sprang agilely forward, swung the staff, and brought it so proficiently down upon Chou-hu's lowered head that the barber dropped lifeless to the ground and the weapon itself was shattered by the blow. Without a pause Yan clothed himself with his master's robes and ornaments, wrapped his own garment about Chou-hu instead, and opening a stone door let into the ground rolled the body through so that it dropped down into the cave beneath. He next altered the binding of his hair a little, cut his lips deeply for a set purpose, and then, reposing upon the couch of the inner chamber, took up one of Chou-hu's pipes and awaited Ai-ang's return.

"It is unsupportable that they of the silk market should be so ill-equipped," remarked Ai-ang discontentedly as she entered. "This pitiable one has worn away the heels of her sandals in a vain endeavour to procure a suitable embroidery, and has turned over the contents of every stall to no material end. How have the events of the day progressed with you, my lord?"

"To the fulfilling of the written destiny. Yet in a measure darkly, for a light has gone out," replied Yuen Yan.

"There was no unanticipated divergence?" enquired the woman with interest and a marked approval of

this delicate way of expressing the operation of an unpleasant necessity.

"From detail to detail it was as this person desired and contrived," said Yan.

"And, of a surety, this one also," claimed Ai-ang, with an internal feeling that something was insidiously changed in which she had no adequate part.

"The language may be fully expressed in six styles of writing; but who shall read the mind of a woman?" replied Yan evasively. "Nevertheless, in explicit words, the overhanging shadow has departed and the future is assured."

"It is well," said Ai-ang. "Yet how altered is your voice, and for what reason do you hold a cloth before your mouth?"

"The staff broke and a splinter flying upwards pierced my lips," replied Yan lowering the cloth. "You speak truly, for the pain attending each word is by no means slight, and scarcely can this person recognise his own voice."

"Oh incomparable Chou-hu, how valiantly do you bear your sufferings!" exclaimed Ai-ang remorsefully. "And while this heedless one has been passing the time pleasantly in handling rich brocades you have been lying here in anguish. Behold now, without delay she will prepare food to divert your mind, and to mark the occasion she had already purchased a little jar of gold-fish gills, two eggs branded with the assurance that they have been earth-buried for eleven years, and a small serpent preserved in oil."

When they had eaten for some time in silence Yuen Yan again spoke. "Attend closely to my words," he said, "and if you perceive any disconcerting oversight in the scheme which I am about to lay before you do not hesitate to declare it. The

threat which Heng-cho the baker swore, he swore openly, and many reputable witnesses could be gathered together who would confirm his words, while the written message of reconciliation which he sent will be known to none. Let us therefore take that which lies in the cave beneath and, clothing it in my robes, bear it unperceived as soon as the night has descended and leave it in the courtyard of Heng-cho's house. Now Heng-cho has a fig plantation outside the city so that when he rises early, as his custom is, and finds the body he will carry it away to bury it secretly there, remembering his impetuous words and well knowing the net of entangling circumstances which must otherwise close around him. At that moment you will appear before him, searching for your husband, and suspecting his burden raise an outcry that may draw the neighbours to your side if necessary. On this point, however, be discreetly observant, for if the tumult calls down the official watch it will go evilly with Heng-cho, but we shall profit little. The greater likelihood is that as soon as you lift up your voice the baker will implore you to accompany him back to his house so that he may make a full and honourable compensation. This you will do, and hastening the negotiation as much as is consistent with a seemly regard for your intolerable grief, you will accept not less than five hundred taels and an undertaking that a suitable funeral will be provided."

"Oh thrice-versatile Chou-hu," exclaimed Ai-ang, whose eyes had reflected an ever-increasing sparkle of admiration as Yan unfolded the details of his scheme, "how insignificant are the minds of others compared with yours! Assuredly you have been drinking at some magic well in this one's absence, for never before was your intellect so keen and lustreful.

Let us at once carry your noble stratagem into effect, for this person's heart throbs to take her part in a project of such remunerative ingenuity."

Accordingly they descended into the cave beneath and taking up Chou-hu they again dressed him in his own robes. In his inner sleeve Yan placed some parchments of slight importance; he returned the jade bracelet to his wrist and by other signs he made his identity unmistakable; then lifting him between them, when the night was well advanced, they carried him through unfrequented ways and left him unperceived within Heng-cho's gate.

"There is yet another precaution which will ensure to you the sympathetic voices of all, if it should become necessary to appeal openly," said Yuen Yan when they had returned. "I will make out a deed of final intention conferring all I possess upon Yuen Yan as a mark of esteem for his conscientious services, and this you can produce if necessary in order to crush the niggard baker in the winepress of your necessitous destitution." Thereupon Yan drew up such a document as he had described, signing it with Chou-hu's name and sealing it with his ring, while Ai-ang also added her sign and attestation. He then sent her to lurk upon the roof, strictly commanding her to keep an undeviating watch upon Heng-cho's movements.

It was about the hour before dawn when Heng-cho appeared, bearing across his back a well-filled sack and carrying in his right hand a spade. His steps were turned towards the fig orchard of which Yan had spoken, so that he must pass Chou-hu's house, but before he reached it Ai-ang had passed out and with loosened hair and trailing robes she sped along the street. Presently there came to

Yuen Yan's waiting ear a long-drawn cry and the sounds of many shutters being flung open and the tread of hurrying feet. The moments hung about him like the wings of a dragon-dream, but a prudent restraint chained him to the inner chamber.

It was fully light when Ai-ang returned, accompanied by one whom she dismissed before she entered. "Felicity," she exclaimed, placing before Yan a heavy bag of silver. "Your word has been accomplished."

"It is sufficient," replied Yan in a tone from which every tender modulation was absent, as he laid the silver by the side of the parchment which he had drawn up. "For what reason is the outer door now barred and they who drink tea with us prevented from entering to wish Yuen Yan prosperity?"

"Strange are my lord's words, and the touch of his breath is cold to his menial one," said the woman in doubting reproach.

"It will scarcely warm even the roots of Heng-cho's fig-trees," replied Yuen Yan with unveiled contempt. "Stretch across your hand."

In trembling wonder Ai-ang laid her hand upon the ebony table which stood between them, and slowly advanced it until Yan seized it and held it firmly in his own. For a moment he held it, compelling the woman to gaze with a soul-crushing dread into his face; then his features relaxed somewhat from the effort by which he had controlled them, and at the sight Ai-ang tore away her hand, and with a scream which caused those who stood outside to forget the memory of every other cry they had ever heard, she cast herself from the house and was seen in the city no more.

These are the pages of the forgotten incident in the life of Yuen Yan which this writer has sought out and discovered. Elsewhere, in the lesser Classics, it may be read that the person in question afterwards lived to a venerable age, and finally passed above surrounded by every luxury, after leading an existence consistently benevolent and marked by an even exceptional adherence to the principles and requirements of the Virtues.

ERNEST BRAMAH.



## STEEP STAIRS AND BITTER BREAD.

Yea, thou shalt learn how salt his food who fares  
 Upon another's bread, how steep his path  
 Who treadeth up and down another's stairs.

DIVINA COMMEDIA, *Paradiso*, Canto xvii.

SIGHS and tears are a language common to all, but the jests of a wounded heart are couched in a tongue that is rarely understood. To feel the full anguish of Dante's humiliation, it is necessary to go, not to that fair Florence which cast him forth, closing her doors irrevocably against his return, not to Ravenna, where, lulled by the moan of pinewoods and of sea, he sleeps his exiled sleep, but to Verona, where with a look of scornful calm his statue stands within a stone's throw of the Prefettura, which was once the palace of that Can Grande della Scala, whose stairs were so steep to the poet's feet.

The fame of the great cities of Italy — Rome, Florence, Venice — is in every mouth; but there are many of her smaller towns which though less important are scarcely less full of interest, and which are beautiful in the memories of those who have visited them. Of such towns there are few more striking examples than Verona, known to how many but as the dwelling-place of Shakespeare's two Gentlemen, or as the scene of the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet. To walk on the banks of the Adige when the sun is setting is to be transported into a scene of almost more than earthly loveliness. The winding river reflects the glow of the sky and rolls its waves of crimson and gold under the grey walls of the town; on the opposite height rises

the Castello San Pietro, the ancient fortress of the German Theoderic, which, after passing through many changes and chances of fortune, was destroyed by Napoleon in 1801, and restored by the Austrians in 1849. The history of Italy, with its occupation by successive foreign powers, might well be symbolised in such a scene. Etruscans, Gauls, Romans, Germans, Lombards and Venetians, — all in turn have held sway over this spot of earth, and all as they passed have exhibited in miniature the whole story of Italy, her prosperity and her decay, her enthrallment and her emancipation.

Indeed, few cities on earth are more lovely than Verona, and yet, with all its loveliness, it has been the scene of so much sorrow. Here, on these very stones, lingered the feet of Dante; on this very prospect his sad eyes rested; this self-same river murmured its melancholy in his ears, as he brooded over his bitter experiences in della Scala's palace of which he speaks in the lines already quoted.

A notable race were these Scaligeri, a race deserving well of the honour paid to them by the city over which they ruled. For in that fierce struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, when towns and provinces changed hands as quickly as counters in a game, where populations were decimated and whole country-sides laid

waste, the Scaligeri, in a lesser degree, did for Verona what the Medici did for Florence; they protected it by their powerful sway and raised it to an eminence which it had not known before. Martino della Scala was elected Podestà in the year 1260; two years later he was made Capitano del Popolo, and from this time until 1389, when Visconti of Milan attacked and conquered Verona, the city was governed by his descendants. Of these descendants the best known is Can Grande, or Cane the Great, the patron of Dante, who governed Verona from 1308 to 1329. His eldest brother, Bartolommeo, who died in 1303, is the Prince Escalus of *ROMEO AND JULIET*, the quarrel, with its tragic results, taking place in the city during his term of government. The second brother, Alboino, succeeded him, and after his death, Francesco, or as he is generally called, Can Grande, who had shared his rule for several years, succeeded to the sole sovereignty.

This young prince is one of the typical figures of Italian history; his powers, his opportunities, and his achievements were all on a smaller scale than those of Lorenzo the Magnificent, yet the spirit which animated the great Medici was undeniably present in the Scaliger. Surrounded by admirers and placed upon a pinnacle of worldly glory, he yet had a touch of that saving grace which can prevent the favourites of fortune from being dazzled by their own success. Amid the enjoyment of his personal triumphs he was able to appreciate the triumphs of other men in far different fields; nor was he altogether devoid of that genius for friendship without which a ruler must be forever condemned to the society of slaves and sycophants.

Dante's acquaintance with the

Scaligers had begun during the reign of Bartolommeo, to whom he had been sent during the first days of his banishment from Florence to entreat him to send an army to the help of the exiles. Can Grande was then a child at his brother's court and when the poet sought refuge in Verona a second time, the young prince had still barely completed his twenty-fifth year. The contrast between the two men could hardly have been greater. Dante was now about forty years old, and already he had passed through a varied and troubled experience. His boyhood and youth had centred round a pure and hopeless love; Beatrice, the guiding star of his existence, had been taken from him, first by marriage and then, still more irrevocably, by death. His joy and his despair had found expression in the *VITA NUOVA*, a book which is as veritably the embodiment of his early life, as the *DIVINA COMMEDIA* is the embodiment of his maturity. Its aloofness from the ideas and feelings of ordinary humanity give it an originality which, though altogether different, is not less marked than the originality of the later work. It is the expression of a delicate and exquisite nature, steeped both in rapture and anguish, yet so unstained by earthly follies, so untouched by worldly conflicts, that its joy and sorrow are transfigured and etherealised, purged alike of human passion and of human pain.

This first period of Dante's life was followed by a sudden and complete transition. From that state of mental detachment in which, like Ariel, he had hovered singing in the middle air, he now plunged down into the thick of earthly struggle and occupation. His marriage, the birth of his seven children, his employment by the State, the turmoils and

troubles of his native city, followed one another in quick succession. He, who had so lately absorbed himself in imaginative woes, as delicious almost as they were cruel, was now torn with party strife, and stained with the dust and soil of jealousy and recrimination, of envied power and anathematised disgrace. Laying aside his dreams, he toiled terribly for his fellow-citizens, and in return his fellow-citizens cast him out, the doors of his home were for evermore closed to him, and the Florence that he loved spurned him from her gates. Bitterness of spirit, scorn, indignation, and despair were the inevitable results of such a fate; and it is not to be wondered at that for the first year or two of his exile, Dante should have spent his time in plots and counterplots, in fervid conferences with his fellow-conspirators, and in passionate attempts to persuade some friendly despot to come to the aid of himself and his fellow-exiles.

But this period of wrathful effort was but the swell that follows the storm. Pre-destined to failure, failure at length ceased to trouble him, or rather his failure taught him how unworthily his time was spent in the company of plotters and avengers.

That shall gall thee most,  
Will be the worthless and vile com-  
pany

With whom thou must be thrown into  
these straits.

For all ungrateful, impious all, and  
mad,

Shall turn 'gainst thee: but in a little  
while

Theirs, and not thine, shall be the  
crimson'd brow,

Their course shall so evince their  
brutishness,

To have ta'en thy stand apart shall  
well become thee.

This was to him the turning-point. The vision of Beatrice, obscured for the moment, came back to him with

even greater clearness and beauty, and like a true artist, turning to gain the losses that he had suffered, he set himself to follow it with all the added strength of a nature that had passed through the furnace and been welded fast by the hammer of fate. Such had been the threefold experience of Dante, an experience which in some degree recalls the threefold experience of another singer of Heaven and Hell, who, leaving the quiet seclusion of his studious dreams, plunged into the labours of the State, to return at a later day to the vision of that lost Paradise which had engaged his youthful fancy.

With this experience behind him, a man of middle life, saddened, disappointed and world-wearied, Dante came to Verona, seeking refuge at the court of Can Grande. At first sight it might have seemed impossible that any friendship could exist between two human beings set so far apart by fortune and by fate. Young, handsome, powerful and rich, Can Grande was at the zenith of his fame; his exuberant vitality, his splendid spirits, had all the profusion of a midsummer morning; while Dante's life was but a twilight piece, breathing autumn, and chilly with impenetrable gloom. And yet the very contrast between them appeared to draw them closer together; the Prince's feeling may indeed have been only the shallow affection of a nature selfishly kind and carelessly generous, but Dante's frozen heart warmed and melted in sudden joy. It is easy for us at the present day to blame him for thus allowing himself to expand in the warmth of a fictitious sunshine; let us rather put ourselves in his place and see if his conduct was not altogether natural.

Dante, it must be remembered, was an exile; his love for Florence was of that clinging and enduring kind

which floods cannot quench nor flames devour; but like all such love it was capable of biting with a serpent's tooth the breast in which it was borne. How bitterly he felt his banishment may be seen in his *IL CONVITO*, where he pours out his woes in no measured terms.

Alas, had it pleased the Dispenser of the Universe that neither others had committed wrong against me, nor I suffered unjustly! Suffered, I say, the punishment of exile and poverty since it was the pleasure of the citizens of that fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth out of her sweet bosom, in which I had my birth and nourishment even to the ripeness of my age; and in which, with her good will, I desire with all my heart to rest this wearied spirit of mine and to terminate the time allotted to me on earth. Wandering over almost every part to which this our language extends, I have gone about like a mendicant, showing against my will the wound with which fortune has smitten me, and which is often imputed to his ill-deserving on whom it is inflicted. I have indeed been without a sail and without steerage, carried about to divers ports and roads and shores, by the dry wind that springs out of sad poverty, and have appeared before the eyes of many, who perhaps from some report that had reached them had imagined me of a different form; in whose sight not only my person was disparaged, but every action of mine became of less value, as well already performed, as those which yet remained for me to attempt.

The pangs which Dante suffered could not be healed by any alien kindness, but they could be soothed and alleviated. Florence banished him, Verona received him; the rulers for whom he had laboured spurned and rejected him; the Prince upon whom he had no claim threw open his palace doors and took him in.

Of his love for wife and children we cannot speak so surely; yet it is not possible that all family bonds and all ties of friendship should have

been suddenly severed, without the infliction of severe suffering. Dante was lonely, as none but great spirits are ever lonely, and in Can Grande's kindness he found a solace for his aching heart.

Of his love for his work no doubt can exist. The poem which he had left behind him in Florence, which his wife had carefully preserved and his nephew had restored to him, had now been recast, expanded, and continued, laboured on by day and pored over by night, until it had become an integral part of his being. He realised now that this was the thing that he had been sent into the world to do, this was in deed and in truth himself, the very soul of his existence. Parents have many a time been blinded by the deceptive praise of their offspring; is it wonderful that Dante should have been fascinated by an appreciation of the child of his brain which was in all probability perfectly genuine? The gallant young Prince who made a business of pleasure and a sport of war, had, like so many other princes of his age and race, an intense admiration for genius; an artist, a poet, or a sculptor, was considered to add lustre to the court of his protector, and though Can Grande may not have realised that he was harbouring an immortal, he was yet interested enough to charm the writer whose words seemed to so many but as idle tales. Boccaccio has recorded that Dante, when he had finished seven or eight cantos of his poem, would send them, before anyone else had seen them, to Can Grande, "whom he held in respect above every other," a convincing proof that he felt secure of sympathy and comprehension in this most tender point of his whole nature.

From all these mingled sources, then, sprang the feeling which made the first part of Dante's sojourn at

la Scala's court pass so lightly, and which prompted the dedication to the PARADISO,—“To the Magnificent and Victorious Signore, the Signore Cane Grande della Scala.” In this dedication he speaks of the report of the young prince's glory and greatness which had drawn him irresistibly to Verona :

Not to remain in long uncertainty, like that eastern queen who came to Jerusalem, and as Palladius came to Helicon, so came I to Verona to judge faithfully with my own eyes. Then I saw your magnificence, which I had already heard of from every quarter. I saw and proved your kindness. And as at first I feared that what was said exceeded the facts, so now I know that the facts go beyond the report. From which it came that as by simple hearing I had been moved towards you in a softening of the spirit, so at first I became your devoted friend. Nor do I think that by assuming the name of friend that I am presumptuous as many may suppose, for the sacred chain of friendship links together those who are unequal in rank as well as those who are each other's peers and between the former may be seen delightful and useful friendships.

The last sentence no doubt breathes a hint of future trouble, and both Boccaccio and Petrarch have left us records which show how the pre-science grew into a certainty.

Dante Alighieri [writes Petrarch] was in his habits and speech, by perversity, more independent than was agreeable to delicate and nice ears, and to the eyes of the princes of our age. He, being an exile from his country and dwelling with Can Grande, then the universal refuge and consolation of the afflicted, was at first held by him in great honour, but little by little fell back and from day to day became less agreeable to the Prince.

This gradual loss of favour is scarcely to be wondered at. A moody and grief-stricken man, of daring genius and commanding intellect, is likely enough to prove

a death's-head at the feasts of light-hearted revellers. Rude jests abounded at the court, coarse levity, and deeds which would not well bear the light. Dante, the seer of Heaven and Hell, could not let these pass unrebuked, and a powerful patron could hardly be expected to bear patiently the chiding of one of his humble retainers.

Cane being in a disagreeable mood, which Dante endured badly [writes Boccaccio again], the Prince called a jester before him and praised him greatly to the poet. “I wonder,” he said, “that a foolish man like this should know how to please everybody and to make himself beloved by everybody, which you cannot do who are called a wise man.” To which Dante replied: “You would not wonder at this if you knew that the real foundation of friendship is in the resemblance of habits and the equality of minds.”

A still more unrefined jest was followed by a still bitterer retort. A boy, hidden under the banquet-table according to the fashion of the times to gather up the bones let fall by the guests, laid them in a heap beneath the chair occupied by Dante. The company arising from table, the bones were discovered, whereupon the Prince put on an air of much wonder and exclaimed laughingly, “Our Dante is a great eater of meat.” On which the poet, flashing out upon his host a glance of indignant scorn, replied with a fierce play upon Can Grande's name: “Sire, you would not see many bones if I were a dog (*Mesere, voi non vedreste tant' ossa, se CANE io fossi*).”

But foolish jests, however hard to bear, might yet have been forgiven, if the poet had been able to concentrate his mind upon that work which was now nearing completion, and which was to him at once a mighty mission and an abiding consolation. But Can Grande, who had at first professed the



deepest interest in the progress of the poem and to whom the successive cantos of the *PARADISO* had been submitted, came to think that his guest might be more usefully employed, and that instead of devoting himself to such far-away subjects as Heaven and Hell, he might occupy himself with the affairs of this world. A small office about the Court was therefore found for him, and the poet was bidden to leave his meditations that he might levy fines and settle the petty disputes of the townspeople; a useful work, no doubt, and one most necessary to be performed, but no more suited to Dante than the taxing of casks of beer was to Robert Burns. Superiority is in some cases the most irritating of reproaches. Can Grande had expected abject deference in return for his protection, but the man whom he patronised was greater than himself, and chafing at the unwelcome thought, he sought to redress the balance by inflicting humiliation on the loftier spirit.

Expostulation would only have produced more biting taunts. Dante endured until he could endure no more; friendship might have held him for ever in its sacred chain, but when his host made it clear to him that his presence had become a burden, it was time for him to leave his refuge and strike out once more upon the open sea. Verona, with all her loveliness, was now but a prison to him; he longed to escape from her wooded slopes and her terraced streets, her river winding its way through olives and vineyards, and above all from those palaces where gay ladies and mirthful cavaliers made merry over the taciturn poet, with face darkened, as Boccaccio says, by the fires through which he had passed.

So the day came, after a space,  
When Dante felt assured that there

The sunshine must lie sicklier  
Even than in any other place,  
Save only Florence. When that day  
Had come, he rose and went his way.

Rossetti, in his poem *DANTE IN VERONA*, thus describes the feeling that drove Dante forth again into the world. The last thirteen cantos of his poem were written after his departure, and these thirteen cantos were not shown to la Scala. Never again would Dante submit his work to that once sympathetic critic, but perhaps he may have regretted the oblivion into which his name would surely fall in Can Grande's mind, when he wrote the lines in the seventeenth canto of the *PARADISO*. The kindness of Bartolommeo della Scala had never galled its recipient, if we may judge from the words which he puts into the mouth of his ancestor Cacciaguida. This spirit, who meets Dante and Beatrice in Mars, or the fifth heaven, is supposed to predict to the poet the exile which had already come to pass, and tells him that his first refuge shall be

In the great Lombard's courtesy, who  
bears  
Upon the ladder perched the sacred  
bird.  
He shall behold thee with such kind  
regard  
That 'twixt ye two, the contrary to  
that  
Which falls 'twixt other men, the  
granting shall  
Forerun the asking.

The lines which follow have been variously interpreted by the commentators; but it is surely clear that they must apply to Can Grande from the allusion to his age, for at the time that Dante visited his brother's court, the boy was nine years old.

— With him thou shalt see  
That mortal who was at his birth  
imprest



So strongly from this star, that of  
his deeds  
The nations shall take note. His  
unripe age  
Yet holds him from observance; for  
these wheels  
Only nine years have compassed him  
about.

But if it is of Can Grande that  
Dante is writing at the very moment  
that he was smarting from his slights,  
it is surely unreasonable that he  
should have gone out of his way to  
record how in his childhood he showed  
such sparks of virtue that it might  
safely be predicted—

His bounty shall be spread abroad so  
widely  
As not to let the tongues, e'en of his  
foes,  
Be idle in its praise. Look thou to  
him  
And his beneficence, for he shall cause  
Reversal of their lot to many people,  
Rich men and beggars interchanging  
fortunes.  
And thou shalt bear this written in  
thy soul  
Of him, but tell it not.

The last lines may convey some  
hint of disparagement, for they im-  
ply that Dante will see Can Grande  
turning rich men into beggars as  
well as beggars into rich men; but  
the passage on the whole is lauda-  
tory, and it seems strange that it  
should have been inserted here.

Strange, and yet not strange! If a  
meaner soul than Dante had written  
the *PARADISO*, he would have pilloried  
his ungracious patron for the scorn  
of the world; but it is not by  
petty spite that the great ones of the  
earth vindicate their cause. Dante  
had eaten of Can Grande's bread,  
and bitter though that bread had  
been he would not revile the bounty  
that had bestowed it; steep as were

the stairs on which his feet had  
climbed, he would not bring dis-  
honour on the roof that had sheltered  
him. Many things were written of  
the Prince in Dante's soul which he  
would never tell to the world, but  
such praise as he could utter he  
would not keep back. Whether Can  
Grande's eye ever fell upon that sad,  
reproachful praise, we do not know;  
but even though he made no amends  
to the poet, Dante's wrongs have  
been amply avenged. Time's re-  
venges are the most powerful of all.  
Dante lived and died in banishment,  
but though doomed to perpetual exile,  
he has found an imperishable home  
in the memory of his fellow-men,  
while Can Grande lives only by his  
passing connection with the poet.  
Every traveller who goes to Verona  
visits the tombs of the Scaligeri,  
those wonderful sculptured monu-  
ments surrounded by the graceful  
railing of ironwork on which appears  
so often the crest of the eagle and the  
ladder. Can Grande's tomb is to be  
seen over the door of the little church  
of Santa Maria Antica; mounted on  
his horse of stone, his carved lips  
breathe defiance, as though once  
again he would shout his battle-cry  
of *Viva Cane* to a field of flying  
foes. Yet who, of all the many  
hundreds who have gone to look  
upon his tomb, know aught of him  
except that he belonged to the  
princely family in whose last resting-  
place he lies?

Eat and wash hands, Can Grande,  
scarce  
We know their deeds now; hands  
which fed  
Our Dante with that bitter bread;  
And thou the watch-dog of those stairs  
Which, of all paths his feet knew well,  
Were steeper found than Heaven or  
Hell!

## A NATIONAL BALANCE-SHEET.

GREAT Britain has often struck me as a gigantic land and manufacturing corporation endeavouring to manage its business without any definite system of accounts, and with its shareholders constantly grumbling because they are shown no returns for their money,—merely an abstract of their expenditure. How or why a nation, which prides itself above all things on its business capacity, should be content with such a state of affairs is a problem to which it is difficult to find an answer, more especially since the materials for the framing of a proper statement of affairs are neither more difficult to collect or to understand than those which are dealt with to the satisfaction of their shareholders by many similar undertakings.

Our land business is the development of our colonial and home possessions: our manufacturing business is the training of sailors, soldiers, and citizens capable both of guarding and maintaining them; and it should be no more difficult to form a trustworthy estimate of the value of either than to assess the value of any other estate, or of any other description of manufactured article whose value may vary from a king's ransom down to a dead loss, simply as a consequence of its position in time and space at a given moment.

A tin of ration beef may be worth its weight in gold at a crisis in a man's life. Most of us who have served in the army have seen it lying about in tons where it was not worth the cost of removal; yet custom and mutual agreement have given it a

fixed quotation good enough for, let us say, Mr. Armour's book-keeping, and the same causes will equally serve to fix the value of a British soldier or sailor under normal conditions.

This in brief is my position; let me now come down to details.

I propose the preparation of a National Capital Account in which the cost to the country in money should be shown on the one side, the estimated value of our conquests on the other.

The first item is not difficult. Nuthall's Statistical Dictionary gives, as the total cost of our wars since 1700 to the close of the Crimean campaign, 1,265 millions, which, with the addition of the operations in Egypt and the Boer War, would bring the total in round numbers to 1,500 millions. Sir Robert Giffen in his address before the British Association in September, 1903, estimates the total wealth of the United Kingdom at 15,000 millions, of Canada at 1,250 millions, of Australia at 1,100 millions, of South Africa at 600 millions, of India 3,000 millions, and our other possessions at 1,200 millions, making a total of 22,150 millions, or nearly 15 times the amount it has cost to win and keep it together, which may be considered financially as a very fair unearned increment on the original purchase-price.

The reply of the extreme school of Free-traders will probably be that, under one flag or another, the world's population would have grown equally, or more rapidly without war, and humanity at large would therefore enjoy equal or greater material

comfort without the assistance of our fleets and armies; and this was undoubtedly the idea in the minds of the political economists of the eighteenth century, whose school of thought was evolved in the days when armies, fleets, and policies were essentially dynastic and not national. To them it appeared that monarchs and soldiers were everywhere and always an evil, parasitic growths upon a nation's industry, and that a reasonable man could settle down and adjust himself to his surroundings equally well in any Christian country.

The French Revolution, which had as its immediate consequence the evocation of the national sentiment in all countries, shattered these dreams for ever, and the philosophers in Germany and Italy, the spread of whose doctrines had done so much to facilitate the success of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic armies, soon found out that to the population at large the question of *under which flag* was by no means a matter of indifference. The net result of the years of suffering under French occupation was the birth of the great continental nations as we now see them, concrete existences struggling each with one another and against ourselves for their share of the food necessary for their subsistence, which is the world's trade.

In England we escaped the French scourge, and it is not therefore to be wondered at if our perception of cause and effect in these matters is less acute than in the case of our neighbours. Yet there can be no doubt that their sufferings were our opportunity, and that this opportunity would never have arisen but for the combined powers of our fleet and armies. Trafalgar alone did not break down the Berlin decrees; it needed ten years of land warfare cul-

minating in the victory of Waterloo to open the Continent to our trade, and whether we could have borne another five years of exclusion may be gathered from the internal state of the country in the years immediately succeeding the Great Peace,—a point the advocates of the extreme Sea-Power school would do well to ponder.

When the French Revolution broke out, our monarchical system had fully proved its stability, and our fleets soon shewed themselves equal to their purpose. Even before all fear of invasion had been dispelled by the victory of Trafalgar, capitalists of all nations had begun to realise where the best security for their money lay, and though we poured out money in subsidies like water, the supply proved adequate for our purposes, and Consols acted like an hydraulic accumulator storing up energy to meet the forthcoming demand.

Free from the dread of invasion our inventors had time and opportunity to develop their ideas, and, when once the war was over, credit was soon available to finance the new manufactories for whose products all the world was then waiting. Thence came the phenomenal expansion of the early years of Queen Victoria's reign; but when the triumphs of her armies again gave promise of security to Germany, and her system of universal military training had supplied her with an almost limitless number of men, specially adapted to the new conditions of organised labour which the progress of invention had meanwhile evolved, capital found a new outlet, and we have since had to deal with a very serious rival.

I have known the Rhine valley since I was a boy, and have seen great cities grow up where thirty years ago there were mere medieval townships. I have discussed the whole question

with leading statisticians in Berlin, and heard the opinions of acknowledged authorities from the United States, and I submit as my conclusion that the expansion of Germany in wealth and population, the direct consequence of the excellence of her military system since 1870, is equal to anything which has been seen in the Eastern States of America and greater than our own since the same date. Surely these examples must suffice to prove that the old saying, *Trade follows the Flag*, is based on sounder foundations than our Cobdenites would have us suppose.

Now turn the tables the other way, and imagine what would have happened had Napoleon entered London and his calculations proved correct,—a general upheaval of society, ten years at least of national humiliation and misery, probably even more bitterly felt than in other countries because of the greater freedom to which we had been accustomed, and then a national revival such as that which swept over Northern Germany in 1813, from the financial consequences of which some of the best families have even yet not recovered. And even then the prospects of success would have been doubtful, for Napoleon would certainly have found means to bind our fleet far more securely than he bound the Prussian army; our dockyards would have been far more easy to supervise than their drill-grounds, and even in those days you could not improvise warships in a couple of months.

Probably our fate would have been that of Ireland,—a long drawn-out agony of famine, followed by wholesale emigration, and after a lapse of years a shrinkage of population down to the bare limits of subsistence which unskilled farming can wring from the ground.

Where would our Free-traders have

been then? Can they suppose that the victorious nation would have welcomed the competition of our better workmen, as they undoubtedly were in those days? Do East Londoners welcome the alien even now? And the alien we get is not quite the same competitor that ours would have been.

It is possible that the reasonable tradesman of the old school who favoured the doctrines of the eighteenth century might have been content to adjust himself to new surroundings and even to tolerate French police and French law-courts. The trouble really would have been that the new surroundings would have refused to adjust themselves to him. The French, after the Revolution, were a very different race to live among compared with what they were in Adam Smith's time.

We might,—probably the majority would—have found a home in America, but the only result, so far as the Free-traders are concerned, would have been to diminish their adherents still further. We all become Protectionists when once we cross the water,—a fact which perhaps admits of scientific, though not of logical, explanation, for the two are not yet synonymous.

Summarising the above facts and arguments I submit that the increment in value of our possessions over their purchase-price is as directly attributable to our fighting-power as the increased value of the property of a railway, let us say, is due to the existence of the line for whose construction it was originally acquired, and may as fairly be shewn on the credit side of our ledger as in the case of the supposed railway, or any other commercial undertaking which borrows money on debenture securities; and this conclusion is sufficient for my general argument.

But the principle admits of greater

expansion and of a more practical nature,—one which would at least facilitate the defence of our Army and Navy Estimates in Committee.

For the past few centuries both the War Office and the Admiralty have been acquiring property all over the country, and developing it in value by the attractive power the assemblage of troops always exercises on the civil population who flock to supply their wants. Why should not the capital value of these be duly credited in the Estimates, so that the country might know the actual value of its purchases?

Some fifty years ago the War Department acquired many thousands of acres about Aldershot at an average price of £7 an acre. Since the establishment of the camp the land has risen in value till it is worth from £50 to £300 according to position. Now it happens that for its special purpose, the tactical training of troops, the War Department could hardly have hit on a worse piece of ground, for according to geological surveys there does not appear to be anywhere else in the world, except a small area in Holstein, a portion of land having similar characteristics. The methods of handling troops are, however, very largely determined by the special features of their training-ground; hence for years the British Army has been developing tactical features of its own entirely inapplicable to any possible theatre of war in which it may find itself, and the consequences may be judged from our recent experience in South Africa. The site also is strategically bad. It is too far to the westward for troops to interpose between London and an enemy advancing from the south coast by ordinary road-marches, while the attempt to use the existing railways would block them to the Salisbury corps still further west. There

exists, however, an admirable training ground in Sussex, strategically most excellently situated for defensive purposes; and if the principle of crediting the War Department with the present value of its purchase was admitted, a large portion of the Aldershot district might be sold and a new ground acquired without having to ask the Treasury for a penny.

Similarly round all our great dockyards, considerable areas of ground exist now quite useless for their original purpose. In the vicinity of Portsmouth and Gosport there must be at least 10 square miles, the value of which is rising daily, that might be realised gradually and exchanged for more suitable tactical stations; and the same process might be applied to many of the older barracks built in our north-country towns originally for police-purposes. Thus, at Leeds there is a cavalry quarter and drill-field of perhaps 15 acres, worse than useless for that purpose but worth something like 5s. a square yard for building, giving a total sum which would suffice for the acquisition of ground and manœuvring powers over country 10 to 20 miles out of the town which would prove of real tactical value.

Our dockyards and fleets are more difficult to assess. If the millenium arrived, the ships at any rate would be of no value, but it is far more likely that the progress of invention may send all existing locomotives to the scrap-heap; yet their value passes unquestioned by all auditors. Most of the docks and their accessories, since they occupy positions of commercial as well as strategic importance, would retain their value in any circumstance. They are in better case, or at least in no worse, than the big railway hotels and stations, all of which might conceivably be-



come useless if the forecasts of Mr. Wells, for instance, should be fulfilled. There can therefore be no legitimate reason for excluding them from our balance-sheet, and when circumstances arise which have to be met by the acquisition of new sites,—as at St. Margaret's Bay—the principle of a deal is theoretically admissible.

My chief point is that, with these figures supplied in tabular form in the annual Estimates, we should at least know where we really stand; and if, as I believe they would, they shewed a good case for the Departments concerned, the ground would be cut away from under the feet of those who waste the public time by constant diatribes against departmental efficiency. Then, instead of squandering their forces in desultory attacks leading to nothing, concentrated efforts could be made against the real seats of our naval and military shortcomings, which are already sufficiently numerous to occupy all our attention for some time to come.

Turning now to the question of profit and loss account. We have first to estimate what is the increment in value as a labour agent bestowed on the sailor or soldier by his military training.

A War Office return, dated 1st August, 1896, gives us some data to go on, which, however, would have been more valuable had the short service system been in existence longer. From this document it appears that out of our 81,000 Reservists, only one in 256 was in receipt of relief; and the average age of these men would be about 30 only. Over and above these there were 560,000 ex-Reservists and pensioners of all ages from 30 to 90, of whom only one in 176 were inmates of workhouses, whereas the average for the whole adult population was one in 45 and of the work-

ing classes one in 37. These figures in themselves are sufficiently striking; but when the classes from which our recruits are derived are considered, and the initial difficulties of the Reservist in making a fresh start in life are taken into account, the improvement in his efficiency is little short of marvellous when we allow for the prejudice, due mainly to the wooden nature of his training, which undoubtedly once attached to the old soldier.

At the date in question, the real change in training had scarcely begun to affect the Reservist, for the first 20 years of the short service system, commencing in 1871, had been occupied in the search for new and intelligent methods of developing the individuality of the soldier. It will be difficult to estimate the value of the Reservist fully trained under the new system until the market of his labour has settled down after the disturbance caused by the recent war. But German experience affords us a guide, and there no doubt whatever is entertained that the trained soldier is a better workman and worth higher wages than the civilian; and from what I have heard in the West Riding of Yorkshire I believe the same conclusion was already being arrived at when the war upset the continuity, for I have often been told on good authority that employers were offering better terms to the Reserve man than to his civilian comrade.

Nor is it found in Germany that the ex-soldier is merely a better workman. Statisticians are beginning to realise that as a consequence of the superior hygienic conditions under which three years of his life (it is now only two) have been spent, his period of usefulness is considerably longer. I was unable to get the exact figures, but all with whom I



discussed the question agreed that five years' extension of a man's working life was well within the truth. The net result of all my calculations was that, if the German army withheld, roughly, 500,000 men from the plough and factory at the beginning of their lives, there were, on the other hand, as a consequence of that army, 1,000,000 grown men still at work, who would have succumbed to the struggle for existence but for the health and strength they had derived from their military training. Taking the whole wealth-producing power of these men at 5s. a day (say £150 a year), and the average cost of the soldier's maintenance at £50 a year, while the drain on the country was 25 millions, a year, the increment amounted to 150 millions, or a clear balance in favour of the nation of 125 millions,—not a bad return on an investment, even if we pass over the undoubted alleviation in the petty miseries of life which come from the increased habits of self-control and general decency it is the special object of all military discipline to foster.

In our case it is not so easy to arrive at a conclusion. The constant drain of life due to unhealthy climates, and, worse still, the numbers discharged as invalids, would materially reduce the prolongation of useful working-life, though the War Office return cited above shews that the consequences are not so serious as one would anticipate; moreover we have hitherto taken seven years of a man's life instead of two only. Yet I think that half-a-dozen shrewd employers of labour, with the aid of such life-insurance statistics as we possess, would be able to form a very fair opinion of the relative wealth-producing capacities of 1,000 average recruits as they present them-

selves and of the 500 or so trained soldiers who represent the survivors of the 1,000 as they leave the ranks; and I should be surprised if the 500 did not obtain a large preference.

One would have to deduct from this 1,000 the number normally destined to die if retained among their old conditions, the failures from lack of that self-control it is the business of the Army to teach,—for courage and discipline are really nothing more than intelligently developed self-control,—the lower output of muscular force, due to deficient food and undeveloped muscle; and when all these deductions had been made, the handicap against the 500 would not be a heavy one.

With the sailors the comparison would be still more favourable; for not only is their death-rate much lower than that of the Army, but owing to the fact that their training involves facing actual danger to a far higher degree than in the Army (in peace be it understood) they are as a body more resolute and self-reliant.

I have hitherto only considered the wealth-producing power of the men as individuals. There is, however, a factor in the evolution of modern industry which gives to the trained soldier or sailor a much higher value as one of a body than considered as a mere unit.

To realise the contrast most sharply, consider the work of a trained body of sappers at some such task, for instance, as a restoration of a railway-bridge, compared with the efforts of an equal body of artificers hastily collected for the same purpose. In time, if the work be a long one, no doubt the civilians will approximate to the military standard; but even to the last the strain on the directing intelligence will be far

greater, and that strain sometimes means untold waste of energy, and consequently of capital.

The soldier-superintendent need scarcely give a thought to securing obedience, the machinery of military law being at his hand to enforce it. He is not troubled by questions of subsistence; other departments are there to see to all that. But the civil engineer has only himself to rely on; his men can refuse obedience, can throw down their tools and walk away as individuals, or come out in a body on strike. In India we have to work under both conditions, and I have never missed an opportunity at home of studying the civil engineer working against time; if my experience has taught me to admire my civilian comrade above all men, it has also disclosed to me the appalling waste of energy involved in the conditions under which he is often compelled to work.

Practically, wherever the work is permanent, the civilian evolves for himself the military system; but to the last he is hampered by the want of the power of enforcing obedience, and it is here where the value of the disciplined man comes in. If he is a strong man, single-handed he can leaven a whole mass, but in proportion as a disciplined element is larger the anxiety of the superintendent is diminished.

There is yet another point where modern evolution in business clashes with the old political economy. Fundamentally all individualists asserted self-interest to be the main-spring of human action; and in the days of slavery and the lash when work was entirely mechanical no doubt the principle was sound in fact, however brutal in expression. "Carry so many sacks from here to there"—"make so and so many bricks in an hour"—"dig so many cubic

feet of earth"—were all tasks whose exact execution could be measured or enforced, and it was entirely indifferent to the overseer whether the men liked their work or not; but it is a very different matter now when the brain has to aid the hands and it is impossible to say whether or to what degree the brain has done its share of labour, until, after weeks of constantly increasing friction and difficulty, the commission of some initially trivial error is traced home to its original cause; even then it is often impossible to say whether it was due to stupidity or malevolence. Trade Union principles and the methods of capitalists have killed the appeal to self-interest for higher pay for better and more conscientious work, and practically the only guarantee the employer possesses lies in the existence of an innate sense of duty inherited from our forefathers, which modern slave-drivers are doing their best to crush. It is here that the employer would find in the Reservist his best support, for in him this innate sense has been developed by seven years of constant training, till in many it has become an instinctive habit which manifests itself in doing thoroughly and with one's best will whatever duty has to be done. However humble his work may be,—perhaps but the burnishing of a bit or the polish of a pair of boots—the soldier has been accustomed to do it well, and he carries the same principle with him into civil life. If at times it makes him slow, it also makes him trustworthy, and it is that which tells in the long run. The difference between individuals may be small, almost infinitesimal to the casual observer; but when one is dealing with aggregates of a million and upwards, infinitesimal variations produce great results.

I confess that it is principally in Germany that I have found the superiority of the trained soldier over the civilian so distinctly marked, but this may be accounted for by two factors: first, the soldier was a picked man, physically at least, before he joined the army; and secondly the German method of training is the result of continuous experiments carried on over a period of very nearly a century, and this long experimental period has led to a sounder apprehension of the psychological problem involved in military training than we have as yet had time to arrive at. Until the recent disastrous campaign we were moving along the right road and rapidly overtaking our rivals. Now, thanks to the interference of the Press and Parliament in details which neither of them have ever been trained to understand, there are signs of a marked reaction; and it is at least possible that before long we shall be losing a larger wealth-producing power, owing to faulty methods on our drill-grounds, than would have sufficed to pay the whole interest on the increase of the national debt.

The reaction, however, is probably only temporary, for, as Clausewitz long ago pointed out, "the sensuous impressions which come before us in action are more vivid than those previously obtained by mature reflection," and as mature reflection asserts itself again, we shall realise that battles are not won by the untrammelled exercise of the right of private judgment by many thousands of individuals, but by that discipline which alone insures the execution of the design of a single commander; and this discipline can only result from the practice of those exercises which the experience of centuries has shown to develop the best habit of instinctive obedience to command,

confidence in one's comrades and one's leaders, and the highest sense of duty towards a lofty ideal,—of, in short, precisely those qualities which modern industry has most need of.

We do not yet appreciate the importance of the part duty plays in modern civil life, how without it indeed our social existence would become impossible. An illustration from railway life may make the point clearer. When a man risks, as railway men constantly do, both life and limb to avert a catastrophe, it is certain that some far nobler instinct than self-interest priced at 5s. a day is called into being; but apart from these occasional revelations of the higher self, duty obtrudes itself into the day's work of almost every man, and to realise the fact it is only necessary to compare the working of our railways north and south of the Thames during the course of a Bank-holiday's traffic. A railway is always a small army in presence of an enemy, or enemies, which in its case are time, space, climate, and the public; and the punctual working of the traffic depends on the exact execution at the right time and place of hundreds of acts by hundreds of individuals all over the system, each and all of whom require to have the most complete confidence in one another if the trains are to be forwarded at all; and one finds, as a heavy day's work progresses, that the traffic continues most punctual precisely on those railways which approximate most closely to the military standards of smartness, duty, and discipline. It is the cumulative effect of each little dereliction from punctuality that tells; and once started, as the day goes on, the men get more and more weary and distrustful of one another, chaos sets in and the drivers see red lights on every signal-post, while the signalmen hardly know

whether their signals are on or off. Sometimes an accident winds up the day, and then there is an enquiry; but the enquiry rarely, if ever, gets to the root of the matter, for strictly the initial cause may lie in a sulky porter who delayed an early train it may be 100 miles down the line, but whose action nevertheless set the whole avalanche of cause and effect in motion.

As it is in the field, so it is in these cases; it is discipline which tells, for discipline makes duty almost an automatic habit. The actions of the body or mind, or of both, are performed with less mental effort; the man withstands friction and fatigue more easily, and consequently his faculties remain unshaken for a longer period.

There is yet another point in which military (and, still more, naval) service tells, which certainly ought not to be overlooked by those who find in education a panacea for all our commercial ills. When the short service system has had time to evolve its full results (that is to say roughly, in about another 10 years), there will be more than a million ex-soldiers and sailors, more than one in 10 of the labouring classes, distributed throughout the country, each of whom will have learnt from personal experience of foreign service what our Empire really is, and something at least of the conditions on which its maintenance depends, each of whom forms a focus for the dissemination of first-hand knowledge of these conditions to his surroundings. These men have their limitations no doubt, but so have the school-teachers; in the aggregate their knowledge is sound, and certainly goes home far more directly to the minds of their hearers than the lessons of the schoolroom, which, even when learnt, are very soon forgotten. What was the com-

mercial value to us of this widely disseminated knowledge during the recent war? Would information derived from geographical text-books have proved a sufficient incentive to cause men at home and in the colonies to come forward in such thousands to maintain our Imperial unity?

Of the Volunteers and Militia it will be sufficient to point out, that, slight though their training is, every one agrees that they are physically and mentally improved by it; but as yet they are as nothing to what both may become when once their importance as a National University, the home of a true secondary education in its best sense, is more generally appreciated. Even considered as an educative influence their value to the stability of the country is enormous, for their work brings them in contact with the actual facts on which the maintenance of the Empire depends, and secures for all schemes of national defence at any rate the rudiments of an intelligent hearing.

They may, indeed they do, hold fantastic notions on many very essential points of tactical training, but on the broad facts of the necessity for discipline and subordination they are thoroughly sound. Their great service has been to bridge the gulf between the Regular Army and the nation. Little more than half a century ago, national apathy towards the Army was so supreme that the individual soldiers (the heroes of Meannee, Aliwal, and Chillianwallah be it noted) were social outcasts, and the Army itself so hopelessly deficient in trains, stores, and all necessary paraphernalia for the making of war, that in the Crimea it starved within seven miles of its base, and in peace it was so neglected that the death-rate at home averaged 22 per 1,000 against about three per 1,000 now.

A return to this state of things is

inconceivable, and though short service must count for much in bringing about the present improved condition of affairs so strikingly shown in the recent war, it must not be forgotten that, but for the Volunteer movement, short service itself would have had no chance of success.

Nor must the influence of the Volunteers on the growth of the Navy be overlooked. The directing organs of that service knew well enough the vital importance of powerful fleets to national existence; but it was not till many thousand civilians had passed through the Volunteer ranks and learnt, from their experiences at Easter Monday reviews and elsewhere, how exceedingly awkward for them it would prove if the sham fights on those occasions were to turn to real ones, that it became possible for the Navy to obtain a public hearing.

What the monetary value of this hearing has been to the country it is impossible to estimate in actual figures; but the acknowledged fact that it was the power of our fleets alone which preserved us during the Boer War from foreign interference, and thus enabled us to carry our land operations to a successful issue, enables us at least to approximate to a conclusion. Nor is this the only occasion during the past 20 years that the combined fighting power of our sea and land forces has preserved us from European complications. Egypt, Madagascar, Penjdeh, Siam, Fashoda all occasioned political tension of an extreme character, which could hardly have passed off peacefully but for the possibilities our readiness for war, such as it was, revealed to our enemies. To learn how much of this readiness may be fairly attributed to the educative influence of our Volunteers, which by degrees had prepared the ground for the reception of our

soldiers' warnings, contrast the hearing accorded to such veterans as the Duke of Wellington and Sir John Burgoyne in 1848, before the Volunteer movement was initiated, with the interest now shown in our national defences by the Press, and by the existence of such institutions as the Navy League, the National Service League, and kindred societies.

Briefly it is tolerably certain that from 1861 to 1901 not less than a million and a half of able-bodied men passed through the ranks of the Volunteers, of whom at any one time after 1870 about one million were alive and in possession of votes, reasonably certain to be cast intelligently in favour of both naval and military efficiency. As there are only six million and a half of voters in the United Kingdom it seems probable that their influence has been a large one; and since £800,000 a year has been the average cost of this National University for the training of men in the duties of citizenship and the bearing of arms, this has been a small sum to pay for our escape from our many dangers, and contrasts well economically with the 25 millions a year expended on our educational system, in which no place for the conception of duty to King and Country has as yet been found.

I am far from suggesting that the Volunteer vote has ever been cast solid, or ever will be, for naval or military reform; but general elections are won or lost by the transfer of a very small margin of votes, and who can doubt that many and many a vote in such struggles has been influenced by the lessons learnt in our only National School of Arms?

To sum up the whole argument, I submit that our national impatience of taxation arises very largely from the general ignorance prevailing as to the functions of armies and navies



both in peace and war, and the work they have accomplished in the past.

Their results in war can be easily assessed by comparing the actual cost in men and money of the conflicts in which we have been engaged, and the present value of the colonies and the trade we have thereby acquired. Their work in peace is more difficult to assess, but may be arrived at by much the same methods so often invoked to justify our ordinary educational expenditure, the diminution, that is to say, in the cost of crime and the increased earning capacities due to a more cultivated intelligence.

Following out the same line of reasoning, a far stronger case can be made for the modern short service soldier or sailor. They do not appreciably trouble the prisons, and but few of them reach the workhouse. They are, as a body, healthier men, with far more character and a higher sense of discipline and duty than their civilian contemporaries, and, as a consequence, are far more valuable as wealth-producing members of the community; for modern industries depend much more on these factors of character, duty and dis-

cipline, than on the book-learning of board-schools or the technical education of Urban Councils. Finally they make better husbands and healthier fathers than the bulk of the classes from whom they are drawn, and for that reason alone are worth all they cost us and more; for we shall need all the healthy minds in healthy bodies we can raise in the struggle for national existence which now lies before us.

Lastly, if our statisticians prove incapable of arriving at data to determine the monetary value of the many factors I have indicated, I submit that the preparation of a departmental balance-sheet presents no difficulties at all; and were such a document officially put forward, one half the labour of our Secretaries of State in defending their Estimates in Parliament would be eliminated, and the administration of the Services be shewn to have been on the whole neither wasteful nor extravagant, when compared with business organisations of approximately equal magnitude and intricacy.

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